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ABSTRACT

The Protocol Materials in English (PME) project was set up to study literature and the teaching of literature in an effort to determine whether it is possible to discover hierarchies of concepts and to create materials to illustrate those concepts. In the film series "Responding to Literature," the category system presented has as its point of reference the source within a literary work of the reader's response. The ten aspects of the literary work that have been identified in this guide for "Responding to Literature" are those that produce responses in readers and that readers talk about. Six concepts deal with the contents of literature, three with literary form, and one with the author in the work. The section of this guide devoted to the ten films in the series contains an explanation of the concepts each film is illustrating, a summary of the major points made in each film, and appropriate activities for preservice and inservice settings. In addition, there are essays about theories of reader response and the use of category systems in the teaching of English. (RB)

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PROTOKOLLON

Guide to the Film Series

RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

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Introducing

PROTOCOL MATERIALS IN ENGLISH

"About the word 'protocol,' " Edwin Laidlaw said, "I can settle that for you. Now that I'm a publisher I'm the last word on words. It comes from two Greek words, *protos,* meaning 'first,' and *kolla,* meaning 'glue.' Now why glue? Because in ancient Greece a *protokollon* was the first leaf, containing an account of the manuscript, glued to a roll of papyrus. Today a protocol may be any one of various kinds of documents — an original draft of something, or an account of some proceeding, or a record of an agreement."

—from *Champagne for One* by Rex Stout

For people in the field of English, the word "protocol" has had a particular meaning ever since I.A. Richards published *Practical Criticism* in 1929. Richards used the term to refer to the responses of British university students who were asked to write interpretations and evaluations of a group of unidentified poems. A "protocol" for Richards was in effect the document to be studied — not the poem but the response; and Richards was able to draw conclusions from such documents about what he considered to be wrong readings and the poor taste of these students. For those who know the work of Richards, it is not hard to accept our sense of a "protocol" as a record of experience to be studied.

Our use of the term "protocol" does not come directly from Richards but by way of another book, *Teachers for the Real World.* In this book, which was an outgrowth of the federally funded NDEA National Institute for Advanced Study in Teaching Disadvantaged Youth, the principal author, B. Othanel Smith, introduced the term "protocol materials." Smith was looking for a way to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the training of teachers. He saw a need for the documentation and preservation of observable behaviors likely to be part of the normal experience of teaching. Smith's emphasis upon behavior — what actually happens rather than what people think happens — derived from his interest in training teachers for what he called "the real world" — a world of contingency, multiplicity, and ever-changing situations. Smith saw the value of various media — film, video tape, audio tape — for the capturing of behaviors and advocated the deliberate collecting of such behaviors.

At the same time, Smith argued that "being close to reality is insufficient." He proposed that "it is interpretation of reality that is important in teacher education." In order to interpret behavior some system of defining and classifying behavior is necessary — in Smith's terms, a set of concepts. In this way, every "protocol" has two parts: a record of behavior and a concept for interpreting that behavior. The concepts most discussed in *Teachers for the Real World* fall into the category of pedagogy, but from the beginning it was Smith's idea that protocol materials should be developed in the subject matter fields and that the appropriate concepts should be identified and behaviors collected in those fields. As a result of *Teachers for the Real World,* a national program for the training of protocol materials developers was funded by the United States Office of Education, involving some 15 projects in the making of protocol materials in pedagogy, educational psychology, the social sciences, and the language arts.

For people in the field of English, conceptual thinking about literature is not new. A book like Holman's *A Handbook to Literature* is virtually a compilation of concepts. Such handbooks and dictionaries of literary terms define and illustrate concepts taken from the traditional categories of literary form. But such books pay little attention to the "content" of literature, except as content has been translated into archetypes — and this is to leave out too much. It leaves out the "aboutness" of literature: what the work has to say about life. This aboutness is probably what first attracts readers to literature, and what they, in turn, want to talk about. The classroom is the appropriate arena for such talk. Teachers of literature, especially on the secondary school level, need concepts that will enable them to understand talk about content so they can feel more easy with it — with their students' response to content.

In addition to these omissions, handbooks of literature can fail the needs of teachers because they look upon literary forms as objective artifacts created by the author. Handbook terms like "plot," "characterization," and "theme" become the means of discussing what the writer has done. They say very little about what the reader does and about the reader's relationship with the literary text. This is the area of the greatest need for study. Through the years the profession of English has acquired a

great body of knowledge about authors – their lives and their work habits – and at the same time has become extremely sophisticated in the textual study of literature. Only the reader has been left out, and yet in a sense literature is for the reader.

II

Literature produces responses in readers. As simple as the statement is, it has to be made because everything follows from this fact. Moreover, the nature of literature is such that each text evokes an individualized response. Each reader is conditioned by past experience – by the society he or she grew up in, by ethnic background, economic status, schooling, drives, and desires. These direct and limit the reader's responses in various ways. But even while each text invokes an individualized response, the reader is responding to a literary text. English teachers, and literate people generally, cherish literary texts and have great emotional investment in them. Without such emotional investment, teachers would not find it worthwhile to teach literature. The danger of this attitude is that it tends to make of the texts objects of value, and it is this "objective" notion of the literary text that is today under serious investigation and attack. It is best to say openly that the nature of literature has seldom been questioned as seriously as it is being questioned today.

While this activity makes for some uncertainty about literature and the teaching of literature, it makes this a very exciting time in which to be teaching literature. No matter what formulation finally emerges for our time – what view we come to take of the literary text – we can agree that the text itself is going to maintain its importance, if not its present ontology. In studying the relationship of student readers to the literary text, teachers will need to have an understanding of the various qualities in the literary work that produce responses in readers, as well as of the various kinds of responses they produce.

Some category system is needed in order to be able to talk about and analyze responses. In the film series *Responding to Literature*, the category system presented has as its point of reference the source within the literary work of a reader's response. That is, we have identified, classified, and defined aspects of the literary text to which the reader responds. It should be understood that, although our concepts name the aspects of the literary work, these are shorthand notations for the reader's response to these aspects. There are, of course, other ways of analyzing and categorizing reader response, specifically in terms of the acts of readers. (A second PME film series, *Creative Responses to Literature*, describes the concepts "imagining," "personalizing," "clarifying," and "valuing.")

In the series *Responding to Literature*, we have identified ten aspects of the literary work that produce responses in readers and that readers talk about. Six concepts deal with the "contents" of literature. Three deal with literary form. And one deals with the author-in-the-work. This category system violates one of the chief principles of the New Critics, who repeatedly insisted on the organic wholeness of the literary work. While agreeing in principle with this insight, which goes back to Coleridge, we find in practical terms that for our diagnostic-pedagogical purposes, it is useful to try to relate the response to aspects of the literary work – even if that aspect is a fiction about a fiction. Moreover, we have borrowed one important insight from the major reader response critics, who point out the usefulness of studying response to content before response to form.

III

Readers are interested in what happens and why it happens in a literary work. They are interested in the portrayal of people's motives, people's beliefs and ideas, the individual and the group, issues of right and wrong, how people know things and the limits of knowing, and how to tell the real from the unreal. These might be categorized as the various contents of literature and might be put more formally as: the psychological, ideological, sociological, ethical, epistemological, and ontological contents of literature. The recognition of multiple "contents" in literature (and a sense of what they are) enables a teacher to see the focus of a student's response – where the student's interest is, the limits of his or her understanding of that content, and what blockages are preventing greater understanding and fuller enjoyment. In other words, such a category system makes up a diagnostic tool for the teacher.

Readers also respond to the formal aspects of a literary work – to its diction, structure, and use of conventions. The reader response movement has illuminated the reader's reaction to literary form in at least two significant ways. First, readers respond primarily to content and then to form. The implication for classroom teaching is that usually it doesn't pay to begin a discussion of a literary work by discussing its form, at least until after the high school years. Secondly, form in literature is not simply a vehicle for the content but rather a defense against the content, especially the unconscious

content of the work. One implication is that the reader's response to literary form is frequently defensive, so that, for example, when students speak of the beauty of the images in Robert Frost's poem "Fire and Ice," they are apt to be defending themselves against the horror of the vision of the end of the world. The implication for teaching is that form is related to the psychology of the reader.

Finally, readers respond to the author-in-the-book. They bring to their reading whatever they know or misknow about the author's life, and from their reading they create a portrait in their minds of the author. This portrait is based on the characteristic style of writing of the author and on a sense of the author's presence as a mind apart from the characters – a presence who has feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes apart from the characters. Readers develop extreme likes and dislikes for the "authorial voice" and respond more immediately to some voices than to others. One implication for teaching is a fuller recognition of how important the writer is to the reader and of the need to channel the drive for information about the writer, to use both biography *and* the work. Another is to realize that authorial voice is a powerful element to be considered in choosing texts. Finally, the notion of "authorial voice" sheds light on what is meant by "style" in literature and can help teachers to talk about style.

Readers are not likely to respond to just one aspect of a literary work. Rather they respond – as revealed by their talk and writing – to various aspects in a complex pattern. The virtue of the category system we have described is that it allows the teacher to identify and isolate one aspect at a time for pedagogical purposes. This is not to try to oversimplify the nature of response, but it is to provide a lens for looking at the interaction between the reader and the text in terms of the source of the response. Each item in the category system is a lens.

We by no means want to suggest that English teachers should teach category systems of response, ours or others', to adolescent readers; but we do want to make the point that English teachers need no longer accept the notion that understanding and responding to literature is a mystery. The films in this series and this guide are intended to provide data about the behavior of readers and a theory to account for that behavior. Each film studies one source within a literary text that invites a response from readers and then instances various responses to that source by unrehearsed student readers as they talk about such works as *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Great Gatsby*, and the short stories of Poe. An overview film, *When Readers Respond*, explains the series and its uses.

In the section of this guide devoted to the ten films, there is for each film an explanation of the concept the film is illustrating, a summary of the major points made in the film, and appropriate activities for preservice and inservice settings. In addition, there are essays about theories of reader response and the use of category systems in the teaching of English.

RADICAL CHIC AND THE LIBERATION OF THE READER

Activity: The class will memorize and reproduce in writing Shakespeare's Sonnet 18, "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?"

Activity: The class will continue in small groups to work on their scrapbooks of the 1920s to learn about the values of society in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

Activity: The class will study Richard Wilbur's "The Fire Truck" with emphasis on the relation of the imagery to the structure of the poem.

Activity: The class will read Robinson's "Richard Cory" and will improvise dramatic situations that show Richard and the townspeople reacting to each other.

Activity: The class will write two-page personal responses to Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* as the first writing assignment on the play.

So read the lesson plans for the college-bound English classes, period 5, Lemon Valley Unified High School, Citrus City, California.

* * *

The city and school and even the lesson plans above are fictional, but we intend for the fiction to illuminate a reality: that on any one day, in any one school, five English teachers are likely to be using five different approaches to teaching literature. Is this the horn of nature's plenty, or is this pedagogical madness? Are these teachers all riding hobby horses, or do they know what they're doing? Are these practices related to theory, and in each case is the theory consciously held, reasoned, available for scrutiny and evaluation?

We can't know the answers to these questions on the basis of the evidence of five activities, though we might make some shrewd guesses. For one thing, it looks as if we have both nature's bounty *and* pedagogical confusion, if not madness. For another, it is probably safe to say that some of the practices are more consciously related to theories than others, and those are apt to be the newer activities. This isn't to say that the more recent activities are necessarily better, any more than it is to say the same thing about the theories. But it is to say that the more recent theories and their attendant practices are easier to talk about, and, more importantly, that they more accurately reflect the feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes inherent in our society than do the older practices and theories. The reasons are various but chief among them is that each age pretty much unconsciously changes the values attached to literature and calls for new theories and practices to support those values. As modern society has accelerated the pace of change, the "ages" have become shorter and shorter, and new theories and practices appear with dizzying speed.

Among our five activities are artifacts of the ancient and more recent past along with examples of today's radical chic. They all reflect the values attached to literature by their ages, and they are all alike in that originally they were intended to help students personalize their experiences of literature — as those ages understood literature. As different as they look to us today, these activities represent versions of reader response as it has looked at different periods, if reader response is understood as the recognition of the reader's need for a vehicle to externalize root responses to the literary work. These activities have all been radical in acknowledging the reader, though they define the role of the reader differently, and they have all been chic.

Let's take the least popular, the most old-fashioned of the activities: memorizing, and particularly memorizing Shakespeare. Some teachers still assign memory work, though the practice is suspect among today's radical chic. What could lie behind memory work? For one thing, the desire to make the poem a part of the students, something to carry away from the class as part of their memory banks. In addition, the readers become reciters and through their recitations they express personal involvement with the poem and feel a oneness with the poet. Think of a time without radio or TV, without electronic amplification systems, when oratory was popular. It isn't hard to see how such a society might reinforce the work of the classroom. Students were able to use their skills in memorizing and reciting at home and in public. But think on a little bit: changing times, large classes, and soon the students are writing out their memory assignments. It's hard to feel a oneness with Shakespeare when worried about spelling and punctuation. Then came the electronic media, bringing a suspicion of the rhetorical style. We became a "cool" society that couldn't decide on a style for playing Shakespeare on the stage or for reciting his works in class. Finally, what had begun as organic and meaningful degenerated into punishment — rote work, mechanical and dreaded, but once based on a theory of reader response.

Post-World War II: a different time, a different society, and a new generation of mod teachers. It is here that we locate the origin of our second activity. While the society at large was tired of war and inclined to be apathetic about the need for social change during the Eisenhower years, the schools took on social responsibility as one of their domains. The "new" English teachers believed in the social backgrounds of literature as part of that new responsibility. Especially in American literature, there filtered down into the high school classroom the work of Vernon Parrington and other scholars who explained American literature in terms of cultural and historical contexts.

Scrapbooks became the vogue. They were viewed as a major means of relating the student to the literary work and its author. There was an almost unconscious belief that as the author had made up his or her book out of the scraps of social and political history, so the students would make up their scrapbooks. Through the scrapbook, the student was supposed to feel a oneness with the writer, and the scrapbook became the vehicle for carrying the response of the student. (Remember, too, we were in a period of late literary naturalism: the first books of Norman Mailer, John Horne Burns, and James Jones.) The social revolution of the 1960s exposed the naivete of the view of the 1950s about the social responsibility of the English teacher. In the world of SNCC and CORE and other activist groups, it became hard to believe in the meaning of clipping articles and pictures from old magazines. Again, what had started as an organic activity became mechanical. The scrapbook finally withered away to become reborn as the collage.

The post-Eisenhower years: a new sense of seriousness and purpose in American society, and with it a high seriousness in the English classroom. The movement known as "New Criticism," which came into prominence in the 1950s in the college classroom through the influential introductory text *Understanding Poetry* (1938) by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, finally reached the high school English classroom. Although New Criticism frequently deals with wit in poetry, as a critical movement it is Arnoldian in its seriousness. The analysis of literary texts as "things in themselves" is taken as a valuable and useful activity because it makes the reader more aware of the work – gives insights into language and structure which become the student's understanding of the work. Hence the third activity: the study of the relation of the imagery of a poem to its structure. And this too is reader response, inductive discovery of the organic wholeness of the poem on the part of each reader – in other words, a study of what produced the effect of the work on the reader.

If New Criticism sometimes degenerates into distinguishing "right" from "wrong" readings, it began as a revolt against the non-serious reading of literary works which accepts the substitution of paraphrase, biography, and spiritual uplift for the close reading of the text. In taking the literary work seriously, New Criticism took the reader seriously, giving credit for his or her perception. New Criticism emphasized the sacredness of literature – the sacred word in the sacred text (and interpreted by the sacred teacher). But the growing rebellion of the 1960s would not tolerate the authoritarianism of the New Criticism, and the movement watched in horror as students invaded professors' offices and destroyed filing cabinets full of the "right" readings of literature.

Meanwhile, the Dartmouth Conference of 1965 had already brought an influx of new ideas into the teaching of English in the United States. In one sense the British members of the conference returned progressivism to its native country, especially in a new emphasis on the personal and linguistic growth of the student. The idea of a student-centered curriculum was introduced by James Moffett and others, until it has now become a new vogue. Encouraging the personal expression of students through acting out the literary experience has become an important new exercise in the English classroom. Hence the fourth and fifth activities – Creative Dramatics and writing personal responses. They are the very latest in English classroom activities for the mod teacher.

Participation, informality, and experimentation are all characteristic of the new activities. Students are encouraged to explore themselves, including their responses to literature. Every student is given the right to his or her own responses, and the teacher is considered a reader with personal responses rather than an arbiter of right meanings. Both the student and the teacher are asked to take risks as they work out what it means to be human. Affective growth, even a sense of "affective learning," stands beside cognitive learning as part of the desired goal. A mechanical, neurotic society is trying to take precautions so that its children do not develop the same neuroses.

The difference between this movement of reader response and the earlier movements is that this one openly makes the claim for the reader – asserts the reader's importance, acknowledges process and growth, and allows for fallibility even while it underscores the importance of literature in the curriculum. But already there are signs of change, including a reaffirmation by some of the need for re-emphasis on intellectual content. And these signs are present even before most teachers have made discovery and full use of the available activities which surround reader response. When dollars are given

to schools on the basis of reading scores, school principals may become impatient with Creative Dramatics, unstructured discussions, and formless writing. Twenty years from now Creative Dramatics may look as old-fashioned as memorizing Shakespeare.

Yet, if we can hypothesize the decline of the reader response movement, since movements, as we have shown, come and go, there is no simple going backward. The liberation of the reader has become part of the permanent record of the teaching of English, and no teacher — old-fashioned or new-fashioned — can laugh it off. Teachers must learn to understand and accept the new role of the reader if they want to make contact with their students. Students have changed, as society has changed, and these changes suggest that teachers must change.

II

The study of literature is affected not only by social shifts but also by shifts within the world of literature. The New Criticism, against which today's English teachers are rebelling, is the heir of ideas in circulation in the literary world for the past hundred years. In France in the nineteenth century, writers like Flaubert and Mallarmé emphasized the power of the word to move and change the world, and British and American writers of the first half of this century made this idea their own. For them literature became the embodiment of the word, with full spiritual and moral value. James Joyce used to boast that he could do anything with language. He could create the city of Dublin through words. He could be a magician through words. Ernest Hemingway talked again and again of the difficulty but also of the necessity of writing "truly." In the end the Hemingway "code," as we call it today, was meant to guide modern man through the post-war world when values were disrupted. His was to be the Mosaic code of the time. This view of literature by the writers in turn led critics and teachers to see literature as a collection of sacred texts, to be studied, explicated, and commented upon in much the way that Biblical scholars study the Bible.

In a world that is post-modern, rather than modern, literature has changed. Writers do not believe in the power of the word to create a new reality. Once again the stimulus has come from France with writers like Nathalie Sarraute and Alain Robbe-Grillet. These writers, along with others, are rejecting "literature" as a fraudulent and sentimental construct and have replaced it with an anti-literature that is meant to be modest, tentative, and concrete. This French view of literature has been sympathetically received in England and the United States, where writers were already moving in a similar direction.

In England the Oxford group of linguistic philosophers were explaining that language could deceive and mislead. These philosophers pointed out that some ideas and feelings could not be expressed faithfully and adequately in language at all. As Ludwig von Wittgenstein said, "What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must consign to silence." British writers like Iris Murdoch and Harold Pinter and American writers like Edward Albee and Donald Bartheleme have worked out writing strategies to cope with what they believe to be the reduced power of words. Critics are writing criticism appropriate to this new anti-literature, and teachers are beginning to respond sympathetically to this new view of literature, which affects our understanding of traditional literature as well.

The broad effect of this revolution in literature, involving a struggle to recover belief in language, has been the rediscovery of the importance of the role of the reader. For the classroom teacher of literature, the consequences of this cultural shift are profound, both invading the day-by-day activities of the classroom and affecting philosophic beliefs about the nature of literature. In practical terms, it means that the student comes to class less and less to learn the "truths" of literature as interpreted by the teacher and more and more to learn how to perform in various ways, both as a reader and a human being.

III

We take it for granted that reading good literature is a worthwhile activity, but probably we should ask ourselves why it is so. Frankly, most of the traditional answers — that literature builds moral character, that it leads to the good life, that it is useful work — not only won't hold up but actually sound cynical in today's world. Other answers — that reading literature provides satisfaction and knowledge — are more acceptable except that it is not at all clear how literature does so. In the past, society in general and the English profession in particular have been more or less satisfied with taking this pronouncement on faith, but we — and our students — are less likely to take anything on faith today. Fortunately, striking advancement in knowledge coming from work in the behavioral sciences

has provided some information that is relevant here. There is ample data to prove that it actually feels good to be creative.

One answer, then, to the puzzle of why it feels good to read a literary text is that reading literature, as well as writing it, is one way of being creative. We are creative in reading literature primarily through our response to the work. In *The Dynamics of Literary Response*, Norman N. Holland shows that in reading literary works we respond "in richer, deeper ways than we can to reality. We feel more fully, more profoundly." He shows also how it is that literature provides knowledge through reader response: "We bring to the events of a work of literature a much larger range of response, one that alters our very perceptions." This change in perception means the creation of new knowledge on the part of the perceiver, the reader.

Through creative response to literature the reader – for our purposes the student – produces new knowledge for himself, and conceivably for others, and receives emotional satisfaction. Part of the knowledge that is created is knowledge about the literary text itself. But if the text is itself the source of knowledge, one might wonder how it is that a reader could contribute to that knowledge. We all believe that literature makes a contribution to readers, but how do readers contribute to literature? Literary critics have always known that readers' responses count for something in the experience of literature. At a simple, but important, level, the combined judgment of a group of informed readers over a period of time establishes that a novel is a "great" book. Readers not only confer greatness upon it, but in a sense, they make it great.

The first literary critic, Aristotle, gave reader (or audience) response a prominent place when he noticed that the effect of tragedy is the purgation of the emotions of pity and fear. Aristotle suggested that the act of purgation was in itself a good thing, but he doesn't explain *how* it is so. By and large, the history of literary criticism shows that the critics and theorists have borrowed heavily from other parts of the *Poetics*, especially from those sections suggesting principles or rules for evaluating excellence in a literary text. The so-called three unities was the best known part of Aristotle for centuries. Most of the critics left alone what we might call the "reader response" part of Aristotle's criticism.

But the greatest critics, Dr. Johnson and Samuel Coleridge, have written of the contribution of the reader, a notion that was developed by the romantic writers and critics. Hazlitt wrote that "It is *we* who are Hamlet." In the twentieth century, Marcel Proust wrote a statement that has become famous in studies of theories of response to literature and to the other arts: "In reality, each reader reads only what is already within himself. The book is only a sort of optical instrument which the writer offers the reader to enable him to discover in himself what he would not have found but for the aid of the book. It is this reading within himself what is also in the book which constitutes proof of the accuracy of the latter."

Literary critics and creative artists have had insights, based on self-exploration and intuition, into the role of reader response as an active agent in the experience of literature. Recently, these insights have been validated by persons working from different perspectives: literary inquirers like James Squire and Alan Purves; literary theorists like Simon Lesser, Norman Holland, and David Bleich; and leading psychologists and psychoanalysts, such as David Rapaport and Franz Alexander, most of whom build on the pioneering work of Freud.

The behavioral sciences have done much to illuminate the nature of the writer's talent, which, if ultimately unknowable, is nonetheless more understandable today. Similarly, the reader's talent is today more understandable than in the past, and hence more accessible to teachers. If classroom teachers cannot "teach" creative responses, they can learn to reconstruct the steps in the mental process performed by the student as he responds to the literary text. They can devise skills for encouraging the student reader to make changes in the process, changes that would produce more creative response – more creative in being more adequate to the feelings and ideas in the text. Teachers could learn to become more creative in their own responses to the literature they teach. Like their adolescent readers, teachers should become liberated, too.

Portions of this essay and of the introduction appeared in earlier form in *Theory Into Practice*, XIV, 3 (June 1975).

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE PME FILM SERIES

RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

Q. Who should see these films?

A. Anyone who teaches literature on a secondary level, plans to teach literature on this level, or trains teachers who teach literature.

Q. What about reading teachers?

A. Reading teachers who work on the secondary level would find these films useful because they help to explain an important part of the act of reading.

Q. What is the best way to see these films?

A. As part of a training group, either preservice or inservice, because the films raise issues and lead naturally to discussion.

Q. Is there a difference between preservice and inservice use of the films?

A. No and yes. No, because both preservice and inservice viewers will be able to profit from the insights and documentation about readers contained in the films. Yes, because preservice viewers might see these films as part of a methods class, with appropriate activities, while inservice viewers might see the films in various kinds of workshops. All viewers will want to master the concepts, but the concepts will take on meaning and value according to the background, experience, and situation of the user.

Q. What do you mean when you say that the concepts will take on meaning and value according to the viewer?

A. The ten concepts represent a category system that can be mastered intellectually and experientially. Intellectually, the concepts are knowable and verifiable and the same for everyone. Experientially, the concepts are "lenses" for looking at and making sense of the real-life behavior of readers. What the viewer sees through the lens depends inevitably upon the viewer's eye. His experience will help him to recognize the behavior, see a pattern in it, and interpret it in the light of that pattern.

Q. Must I see all ten films in order to make sense of any one film and its concept?

A. No, each of the ten films is complete in itself and tells the story of a response to one part of literature. That is, each film fully covers one concept – but before using any film in the series, you should see the introductory film *When Readers Respond.* If this is not possible, you should read the introductory matter in this guide.

Q. Does that mean I need to see only one film in order to get the full effect of the series?

A. No, the more you see, the better. When you see only one film, you are exploring the response to only one part of literature. Reader response is almost never simple but is made up of responses to various parts of literature, often simultaneously. The films deliberately focus on the response to one part of literature for the purpose of study and analysis. The more films you see, the more comprehensive will be your understanding.

Q. Is there a preferred order of use?

A. Yes and no. Yes, depending on who is using the films, one order of use makes the most sense. No, there is not *one* preferred order of use for all viewers.

Q. How do I know which films I should use and in what order?

A. You should decide upon your goals and resources, including the amount of time available. If you are working with experienced teachers who have already spent a lot of time analyzing the formal qualities of literature, you might want to begin with one of the six films on the contents of

literature. If you are working with teachers who talk about the lives of authors in the classroom, you might want to begin with the film about authorial voice, *The Mystery of Edgar Allan Poe.* If you are planning to use the films in a methods course, you might want to include at least one of the content films, one of the films on literary form, and the film on authorial voice. The films are not restricted to these situations. For example, the entire series is being used in a college course in adolescent literature and a graduate course in literary criticism for high school teachers.

Q. Can I use these films with my secondary students?

A. Some high school teachers have expressed interest in showing them to their students, though the films were not designed for such an audience. Frankly, we're not sure of the effect on such an audience.

Q. How should I prepare myself to see these films?

A. University teacher trainers and inservice workshop leaders will undoubtedly want to prepare adequately for using the films, including previewing the films before showing them to a group. Decisions have to be made as to whether to assign reading or other outside activities before the group meets. Further decisions involve whether to share this guide fully with the group, including whether to duplicate portions of it.

Q. How much time should I plan to spend on any one film, and how many films can I study in one session?

A. A lot depends on your purposes and the kind of group you are working with. It also depends on how many times you view each film. Many groups find a second, and even a third, viewing valuable. You could spend anywhere from half an hour to three-to-four hours on each film. We have found that the overview film, *When Readers Respond,* together with two films in the series is about the limit for half a day's study.

Q. How much knowledge of literature must I have to understand and use these films?

A. Not as much as you think. A knowledge of the issues surrounding the teaching of literature is probably as important as any knowledge about literary theory or acquaintance with specific works. In these films we take the position that what the teachers of literature needs to know more about is how literature affects readers: how it excites, bores, perplexes, informs. We believe it is important for teachers to know what it is in the literary work that produces the responses of their students. That is the beginning of knowledge about literature.

Q. Where did you get your concepts and their definitions?

A. The concepts come from both traditional theories about literature and personal experience in teaching literature in the classroom. The concepts of literary form include and depart from traditional ideas about literature. The concept of authorial voice is traditional in that it takes into account the importance of the author for the reader and is innovative in that it accounts for the reader's experience of the author in a new way. The division of the content of literature into six kinds or six concepts formalizes what literary theorists have always known about literature. What is truly innovative, perhaps, is the giving of new emphasis to the effect of the content of literature on readers and the implications that come from such emphasis.

Q. What, then, is the relation of your films to classroom teaching?

A. These are not, repeat not, how-to-do-it films. The films provide a method of analysis – a way of seeing students in their relationships with books. Our system of concepts makes up a mode of insight into the minds of readers as they respond to literature. To learn more about how readers respond, read on in this guide.

THE PME FILMS

1. "East Egg/West Egg": reader talk about the individual and society in *The Great Gatsby.*

2. "Motives": reader talk about characters' motives in Ibsen's *Ghosts.*

3. "Beliefs and Ideas": reader talk about ideology in Roger Simon's *The Mama Tass Manifesto.*

4. "Poetic Justice": reader talk about right and wrong in Ring Lardner's "Haircut."

5. "The Mind of Huckleberry Finn": reader talk about reality in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.*

6. "The Raft and the Shore": reader talk about reality in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.*

7. "Beautiful Words": reader talk about language in Shakespeare and e.e. cummings.

8. "The Shape of Life": reader talk about structure in Hemingway's "Old Man at the Bridge."

9. "Happy Ending": reader talk about conventions and literary patterns in Frost and Blake.

10. "The Mystery of Edgar Allan Poe": reader talk about Poe as revealed in his short stories.

THE CONCEPTS

1. Sociological content of literature. That content of a work of literature which reveals how conflict and harmony make up the interaction of the individual and society.

2. Psychological content of literature. That content of a work of literature which reveals the nature of human motivation.

3. Ideological content of literature. That content of a work of literature which reveals the direction and limits of the thinking that underlie a body of beliefs.

4. Ethical content of literature. That content of a work of literature which reveals the consequences of human acts and suggests systems of values with which to judge those acts.

5. Epistemological content of literature. That content of a work of literature which reveals the nature, extent, and limitations of ways of knowing.

6. Ontological content of literature. That content of a work of literature which distinguishes the real from the unreal.

7. Diction. That quality of a work of literature which follows from the denotative and connotative aspects of the words in the work.

8. Structure. That quality of a work of literature which provides a sense of the shape of conscious and unconscious experience.

9. Convention. That quality of a work of literature which consists of those traditional and emerging patterns that reinforce the conscious ideas and feelings in the work and control the unconscious ideas and feelings.

10. Authorial Voice. That quality of a work of literature which suggests the sense of an author as a being apart from the characters in a literary work – as a person who has feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes, both conscious and unconscious, that find expression in the work.

THE CATEGORY SYSTEM

Readers respond to what the work says about:

the individual and the group
people's motives
people's beliefs and ideas
right and wrong
knowing
reality

These might be categorized as the various contents of literature and might be put more formally:

The individual and the group	**Sociological Content**
People's motives	**Psychological Content**
People's beliefs and ideas	**Ideological Content**
Right and wrong	**Ethical Content**
Knowing	**Epistemological Content**
Reality	**Ontological Content**

In addition, readers respond to the formal aspects of a literary work — to its language, shape, and pattern. Again, these can be identified more formally as concepts:

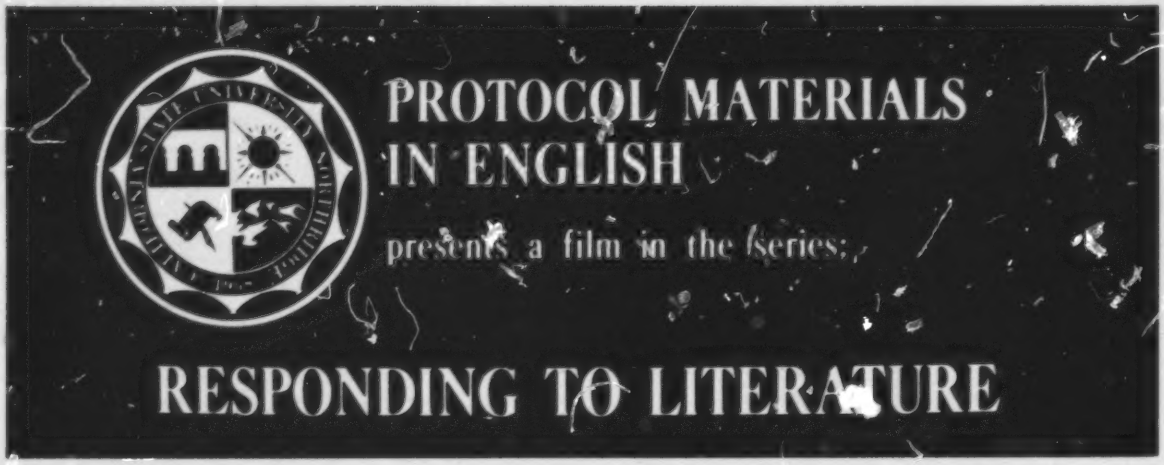
Language	**Diction**
Shape	**Structure**
Pattern	**Convention**

Finally, readers respond to the author-in-the-work. From their reading they develop their own sense of the author.

Author-in-the-work	**Authorial Voice**

Together these concepts and the films about them make up the film series *Responding to Literature.*

MATERIALS FOR USING THE FILMS



THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONTENT OF LITERATURE

East Egg/West Egg

Reader talk about the individual and society in *The Great Gatsby*

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

The sociological content of literature is that content of a work of literature which reveals how conflict and harmony make up the interaction of the individual and society.

EXAMPLE OF READER RESPONSE TO SOCIOLOGICAL CONTENT

"I could relate to Wilson [in *The Great Gatsby*] because he didn't do anything bad, but so much wrong was done by society to him." – from *East Egg/West Egg*

Any definition of society includes the idea that people are more than isolated beings. Each person is surrounded by an environment that consists in part of natural phenomena, in part of other human beings. People respond to the natural world by feeling at times a oneness with nature, at other times a separateness. Similarly, people respond to the social world with feelings of belonging and separateness. Most people have both feelings – of belonging and not belonging – at the same time, and they manage to accommodate both feelings. This accommodation permits them to function in society.

The sociological content of literature is the description of the ways in which people accommodate themselves to society. Frequently it emphasizes and is apt to focus on the incidents in people's lives in which they find themselves in opposition to society. Such emphasis and focus follow from the needs of the writer, who is driven to express a perception of what it is like to be alive and human – that is, in conflict.

To a great extent, the way in which readers see the character in relation to the group depends upon the readers' feelings about their own relations with society. Because such feelings are usually as much unconscious as they are conscious, readers tend not to be fully aware of how these feelings affect their understanding and liking of the work. Readers' feelings about society consist, simply, of their feelings about other people. These may include feelings of love and the desire to emulate. They also include hostile envy, fear, and desire for success at the expense of other people. These feelings shape readers' visions of society, and it is this vision that readers bring to the literary work and against which they test the accuracy and depth of the writer's vision.

Some readers respond most fully to the sociological content of a literary work. Frequently, such readers say that they are responding to the ideas in the work. In such cases, readers may be responding to overt statements made by a character in the work or by the writer in the writer's voice, or they may be responding to the writer's portrayal of conflict and harmony between a character and the social group.

Most readers respond with immediacy to individual characters and more slowly to the portrait of society in a literary work. Yet the writer creates characters by showing them interacting with society. Both character and society act and react. Before readers can understand the character in any depth, they must understand the society. No matter how brilliantly readers may respond with sympathy and understanding to the portrayal of the character, unless they respond as well to the portrayal of the society they miss the complexity of the interaction of the character and the society that the writer has created.

ATTRIBUTES OF SOCIOLOGICAL CONTENT

1. People have feelings of belonging and separateness with society – that is, with other people.
2. Because of these feelings, people find themselves sometimes in conflict with society, sometimes in harmony.
3. Literature portrays these feelings, and literary characters are sometimes in conflict with, sometimes in harmony with society.
4. The reader's view of himself as a social being will affect his response to the characters and their social situations and predicaments in the literary work.
5. Readers respond not only to the characters in a literary work as "real" people, but they also respond to the setting of the work as representing a "real" social world.
6. Readers are seldom fully conscious of their feelings and attitudes about society and hence about the role of these feelings and attitudes in their response.
7. A reader's response to the sociological content cannot be predicted solely on the basis of the reader's social background.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. Here is a list of different social groups with which teachers are likely to interact during an average day:

family
colleagues
shoppers
neighbors
friends

Have the group discuss the following:
What constitutes belonging to these social groups?
What demands do these social groups make on individuals?
What rewards do these groups offer to individuals?

2. For the groups above, how automatic or mechanical is "belonging"? How do individuals know when they belong? How do they know when they are excluded?
3. What are the consequences of being separate from social groups? What are the reasons people have for separating themselves from groups? Are there unconscious reasons that people sometimes have for separating themselves from groups? What would such reasons be?
4. What reasons do groups have for excluding people? Are these reasons always fair in the eyes of others?
5. Discuss the ways in which social groups let their members know what is expected of them in the way of behavior.
6. Discuss the ways in which teachers try to win acceptance by their students. Discuss the conflicts that arise when teachers try to fulfill their professional obligations and at the same time win acceptance by their students. How do the students as a group reveal their acceptance of the teacher?
7. Divide up into two groups. Have each group spend 10-15 minutes devising a society. Make up some arbitrary rules of behavior for that "society." In turn, have one member of the opposite group try to win admittance to the other group without being told the criteria for admittance. What does this activity reveal about the workings of groups and how individuals interact with them?
8. Assign *The Great Gatsby*. In small discussion groups compare and contrast East Egg and West Egg as social worlds. Describe the rules of behavior for each world. What demands does each society make of its members and what rewards does each offer?
9. Both Gatsby and Myrtle Wilson in the novel are trying to win acceptance into social groups. What accommodation does each make? What prevents them from winning acceptance? What conflicts arise between them as individuals and their society?
10. In what ways are Tom and Daisy Buchanan at odds with their society? In what ways are they in harmony with it? In what ways do they themselves make up a society?
11. What role does George Wilson have in American society?
12. Have the small groups agree on some literary characters that their students have trouble understanding. What part of the difficulty may be attributed to the students' failure to understand the social world of the characters?
13. How is any reader's understanding of the portrayal of the interaction of an individual and society in literature limited by personal experiences in society and by personal feelings about society?

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. In small group discussions, compare and contrast the views about East Egg and West Egg held by the students in the film with the views of the group discussed before viewing the film.
2. Compare and contrast the discussion of the characters in the novel by the students in the film with the views of the group.
3. Account for the views of Wilson held by the two black girls in the film.
4. The students in the film differ in their feelings about society and in their views of themselves as social beings. Discuss these differences and relate them to the students' responses to *The Great Gatsby*.
5. How understandable is the vision of American society presented in the novel to the students in the film? Are the students lacking in historical perspective that would help them to understand the novel better?
6. Discuss whether filling in historical background to specific works is a useful part of teaching literature. Agree on a work to be taught to a high school class and devise specific approaches for making the social world of the book come alive.
7. Imagine teaching a literary work to the students in the film. What problems do you see in handling the sociological content of any work with these students? What problems would you expect to meet with these students in teaching *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Othello*, a romantic poem (e.g., Wordsworth), *Catch-22*?

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTENT OF LITERATURE

Motives

Reader talk about characters' motives in Ibsen's *Ghosts*.

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

The psychological content of literature is that content of a work of literature which reveals the nature of human motivation.

EXAMPLE OF READER RESPONSE TO PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTENT

"I could really relate Oswald to myself. The whole thing with authority. He had to put all those trips over on his mom." — *from Motives.*

It is important to talk about how characters in literary works are different from real human beings — and that is traditionally an element of literary form — but it is also important to talk about how characters and human beings are alike: their similarities create in the reader feelings for the characters that involve the reader in the literary text. These feelings have to do with the question of why the characters behave as they do. The motivation of characters in literature — what we are calling the psychological content of literature — is one of the most popular subjects of talk and writing about literature.

The psychological content in literary works may be found in overt statements made by the characters about themselves, by other characters, or by a narrator or through a choric arrangement. In all of these instances, the reader may refuse to believe the explanations offered because the author has suggested that the explanations are partial, inaccurate, or false. One of the chief ways in which the writer makes this suggestion is through the acts he attributes to his characters and the patterns the acts make up.

The resources which literature offers for the explanation of human motivation include more than overt statements or acts or their patterns. As frequently, if not more frequently, explanations of human motivation are implicit in the symbols or symbolic structures which resonate in the work and which lead to intuitive leaps on the part of the reader. Such perceptions into the motives of the characters, however, far from fully satisfying a reader's desire for knowledge about the characters, ultimately lead to the awareness that characters in literature are unknowable, if by "knowable" one means fully understandable. In many ways the books that are considered to be the great books are among the most puzzling because of the variety and depth of insights they provide about human motivation.

In responding to characters, readers are performing a complex act which in much discourse about literary response has been oversimplified through the use of the term "identification." What is wrong with this blanket use of the term is that it overlooks the dual nature of literary response. At the very same time that readers perform the act of identification, they also maintain a sense of otherness from the character. This feeling of otherness comes from the reader's sense of his own identity, and he loses that sense only if he lapses from reality. Only the deranged person believes that he actually *is* Hamlet.

If literary response includes within it both identification and its opposite, which we are calling "otherness," these terms, in turn, cover a range of acts which can be distinguished one from another. In identifying with characters, readers experience a range of feelings from the mildest form of sympathy, or feeling *for* a character, to the most extreme form of empathy, or feeling *as* the character. Even as we sympathize we may approve or disapprove of the acts of the characters. Such responses are possible because in reading we may more easily separate motives from acts than we can in real life. Simply put, outcomes in literature do not have consequences for living human beings.

ATTRIBUTES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTENT

1. Talk about literature is frequently talk about the characters in the work.
2. Readers often respond to fictional characters as though they were real persons: they sympathize, empathize, judge, admire, condemn, etc.
3. Readers seek credible motivation for the acts of characters in order to understand them more fully.
4. Readers judge the work as a whole in terms of the believability of the characters' motives.
5. Readers use their own feelings and experiences in attributing motives to characters.
6. Readers use their understanding of themselves and of other people to try to understand the characters in a literary work.
7. When readers feel with the character, they are said to identify with the character.
8. Readers also maintain their "otherness" from literary characters.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. Divide up into convenient small groups and do the following.
   a) Agree on a literary work that everyone in the group knows. Discuss the work for five or ten minutes, making sure the discussion is tape recorded. Play back the tape. Have the group decide how much of the talk was about the characters in the work. What conclusions can be drawn about talk about literature?
   b) Agree on some famous literary characters (or characters from television or movies). Discuss on tape the characters for five or ten minutes. Play back the tape. Have the group decide how much of the talk was about the author's creation of the characters. How much talk was about the characters as people? What conclusions can be drawn about talk about characters?
   c) Agree on some literary characters that are especially complex and hard to understand. Have the group discuss on tape for five or ten minutes what it finds puzzling about the characters. Play back the tape. How much of the talk was about the motives of the characters? What conclusions can the group draw about the difficulty in understanding characters in literature?
   d) Have the group choose three or four literary works, including at least one classic and one contemporary work. Discuss on tape for five or ten minutes the relative merits of these works. Play back the tape. How much of the discussion dealt with the believability of the characters' motives? What conclusions can be drawn about the way in which readers judge literary works?
2. Have the group read in advance Ibsen's *Ghosts*. Divide into convenient smaller groups and have each group discuss *one* of the following:
   a) Why Mrs. Alving takes advice from Pastor Manders.
   b) Why Mrs. Alving has kept Regina in the house.
   c) Why Oswald wants to marry Regina.
   d) Why Regina believes Oswald about taking her to Paris.
   e) Why Pastor Manders agrees to help Engstrand.

   Keeping in mind these small group discussions and their conclusions, return to the large group. Discuss what the play as a whole shows about the nature of human motivation.

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. Have the group compare their own responses to the characters in *Ghosts* with the responses of the students in the film. How might the differences be accounted for? Were there many similarities? What character did the young people feel most sympathy for? What character did the group feel most sympathy for? What conclusions can be drawn?
2. How did the young people use their feelings and experiences in attributing motives to the characters in *Ghosts*?
3. Was there any evidence of self-understanding on the part of the young people in the film? Of understanding other people? If there was in either instance, how does this affect the students' understanding of the characters?
4. Cite examples from the film of identification and otherness.
5. Identification depends upon our sense of the universality and commonality of human experience: we are like other people. Otherness depends upon our sense of the uniqueness of the individual and his personal identity: we are different from other people. Have the members of the group choose a well-known literary figure in common. Then ask each member to list on a piece of paper the ways in which he identifies with the character and the ways in which he feels otherness from the character. Have the group share their findings.
6. How do identification and otherness help to account for the fascination with villains that readers feel?
7. Choose a literary work familiar to the group. Have the group devise strategies to teach the psychological content of that work to the students in the film. Would different strategies be needed by members of the group to teach the psychological content to their own students? If so, why?
8. Given that human motivation is often complex and confusing, what attitudes should be conveyed to students about the portrayal of motivation in literature?

THE IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT OF LITERATURE

Beliefs and Ideas

Reader talk about *The Mama Tass Manifesto*, a novel by Roger Simon about the student revolution of the sixties

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

The ideological content of literature is that content of a work of literature which reveals the direction and limits of the thinking that underlie a body of beliefs.

EXAMPLE OF READER RESPONSE TO IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT

Interviewer: Do you agree with the views held by either Morrie or Tass?

Student: I can understand how they feel. I can understand what they've done. Right now I wouldn't believe in blowing up an oil derrick partly because I wouldn't do it by the nature of the violence of the act, partly if one is going to take part in these actions there are other things to be done.

Interviewer: So you do believe in some sort of action for a cause?

Student: I do. When things get to such a point – people are repressed – there's a need to vent the frustration. – from *Beliefs and Ideas*

Even in an age of skepticism like ours, belief plays an important role in our lives. It is unlikely, though, that we have thought much about belief and how it works. That is, we have not seriously considered the relationship between beliefs and acts. We are apt to be aware of ideologies – especially political ones – and the big, public movements they spawn. Yet beliefs and belief systems are more likely to be private and personal, and so too are the acts they lead to. Even more strange, the beliefs that most affect our lives tend to be unconscious rather than conscious. We seldom articulate, even to ourselves, the beliefs around which we organize our lives.

While beliefs are pervasive, only the specialist – the philosopher, psychologist, and political scientist – studies systematically their importance as the roots of human conduct. The imaginative writer also studies belief, but he is less interested in systems, except in so-called "political novels." Rather he is always concerned with the individual case – with trying to relate the observable acts of his characters to their personal beliefs.

One way of understanding characters in literature is through their motives, and we may be used to thinking of the psychological content of literature, but if characters *act* because of motives, they literally *act out* their beliefs. In order to understand them – and to understand the author's beliefs about the characters' beliefs – we have to be able to identify those beliefs. If we can understand the characters through their beliefs, we can hope to understand the literary work through the author's beliefs. These may or may not coincide with the character's beliefs. At some level the author's beliefs dominate the literary work, though they are frequently hard to get at because the thinking behind them finds expression in the work as a whole. We may call the ideological content of literature that content which reveals the direction and limits of the thinking that underlie a body of beliefs.

ATTRIBUTES OF IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT

1. All people hold beliefs which underlie their acts.
2. They hold these beliefs with different degrees of intensity and at different levels of consciousness.
3. When beliefs are stated, they are frequently presented as ideas.
4. Beliefs may be private and personal or shared by groups.
5. Beliefs come together to form systems, which we call ideologies. These ideologies need not be political.
6. Characters in literary works hold beliefs which underlie their acts and statements.
7. The work as a whole reveals the author's attitude toward the characters' beliefs, which the author may or may not share.
8. In responding, readers identify and evaluate the belief systems of the characters and the author, which together make up the ideological content of the work.
9. Because readers bring their own beliefs to their reading, they agree or disagree with the beliefs of the characters and of the author. In so doing, they accept or reject the ideas in the work.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. Instruct each member of the group to list three of his most strongly held beliefs about each of the following areas: religion, politics, and society. In addition, ask the participants to cite for each of their belief statements an instance of a specific action or behavior produced by the belief. For example, a person who states that he believes in the "democratic way" may cite as his behavior that he votes in all elections.
   a) Give the group members a chance to talk about the difficulties they had in doing the exercise

above. Encourage them to discuss what is meant by "belief."

b) Have the group discuss the relationship between beliefs and actions. After this discussion ask the group to reexamine their list of beliefs and try to think of personal actions which seem to contradict those beliefs. Do those contradictions invalidate the beliefs or are there other implications?

2. Ask the group to read in advance a work of imaginative literature which has interesting, controversial ideological content *about society*. (Suggestions: Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, Anouilh's *Antigone*.) Ask each member to prepare a list of the most important beliefs about society held by the major character(s) along with evidence to support the statements. Ask for a list of the author's beliefs about society.

a) Divide up into small discussion groups of five persons each. Ask the small groups to discuss among themselves their lists. How much agreement was there? (A frequency count can be taken.) At this point ask each person to share within the small group his own personal beliefs about society as they apply to the work being discussed.

b) Direct the small groups to discuss the following questions:

(1) Which is easier – determining one's own beliefs or determining the beliefs of characters in literature? Why?

(2) How difficult is it to identify an author's beliefs? Why is it important for a reader to be able to do so? Why do readers want to know the author's beliefs?

(3) Discuss the effects of one's own personal belief system on the perception and interpretation of belief systems in literature.

c) Have the groups reassemble as a whole and share their findings.

3. If there is time, ask the group at its meeting to read a short literary work. Choose a work which is interesting and controversial in its ideological content. Ask the group to write their personal responses to the work. (Allow no more than fifteen or twenty minutes for the writing.)

a) Divide up into sub-groups of five persons each. Ask each group to try to identify the ideological content of the literary work. Then have the group share their reaction papers and label each paper according to the following scale:

Level	Descriptor
5	Entire paper devoted to discussion of the ideological content.
4	Most of the paper devoted to the ideological content.
3	Half of the paper devoted to the ideological content.
2	Slight mention of the ideological content.
1	No mention of the ideological content.

b) Have the group discuss the papers, trying to account for the levels of response to the ideological content. Is it true, for example, that the stronger the belief held by the reader, the more likely he is to react solely to that aspect of the literary work? Is the converse also true?

c) Have the groups reassemble as a whole and discuss their findings.

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. Discuss the responses of the black students in the film to the characters and events in *The Mama Tass Manifesto*. What frustrations do they feel? How are these frustrations related to their own beliefs about the world? Compare those responses to those of the white boy, who also speaks of being frustrated.
2. How useful to understanding the concept of the ideological content of literature is the presence in the film of the author of *The Mama Tass Manifesto?* What major point in teaching literature would you make about an author's beliefs and ideas and those of his characters?
3. Have the group discuss their feelings about Nora's beliefs as expressed in the film. Was there a perceptible change in feeling for some of the group when it became apparent that Nora was a character in a play rather than a "real" wife?
4. How does response to a work's ideological content affect a reader's enjoyment of a literary work? Have the group discuss likes and dislikes.
5. Have each teacher in the group tape record part of a class discussion of the ideological content of a literary work. (For those not teaching, a discussion by friends might be taped.) Individual comments should then be classified according to the following categories:

I Comments showing that the ideology is understood and valued by the students.

II Comments showing that the ideology is understood but NOT valued highly by the students.

III Comments showing that the ideology is NOT understood and that an unusual reading or interpretation has occurred.

IV Comments showing that the ideology is understood clearly but that an unusual reading or interpretation has occurred.

Have the teachers share their findings with the group. What can be learned about reader response from this exercise?

6. Divide up into small groups. Each group should then select a literary work with interesting ideological content suitable for use with secondary school students. The groups are to devise strategies and lessons which would help students to understand the ideological content of the work, including recognition of the belief systems of the author, the characters, and themselves.

THE ETHICAL CONTENT OF LITERATURE

Poetic Justice

Reader talk about the consequences of acts in Ring Lardner's "Haircut"

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

The ethical content of literature is that content of a work of literature which reveals the consequences of human acts and suggests systems of values with which to judge those acts.

EXAMPLE OF READER RESPONSE TO ETHICAL CONTENT

"I think in 'Haircut' the barber thinks Jim Kendall's jokes are great even though they are always at other people's expense – but somehow I got the impression that it's intended for the reader not to think the jokes are funny but instead to see them as malicious. So I would take it that that would be the author's viewpoint, and I'm aware of the values that are going on, but I'm not thinking of them in black-and-white terms."—from *Poetic Justice*

One of the great values of literature is that it permits us to live imaginatively the completely moral life that we cannot live in all of our contacts with other human beings. As readers we can share with the writer a vision of pure or "poetic" justice, which is uncompromised by the limitations and necessities of daily human experience. In our day-to-day life we are subject to two contradictory impulses: the moralist within us is constantly judging the moral worth of acts – those performed both by ourselves and by those around us; at the same time, we hold ourselves in check as judges, because we are so aware of human fallibility. Society recognizes this reluctance to judge by devising plans to insure that citizens serve on juries.

As readers, on the other hand, we need not fear that our judgments will affect the fate of the characters. This explains in part why the moral worth of the acts of characters in stories, plays, and poems is one of the topics most frequently discussed by people who read books. As readers we can contravene the order that we not judge lest we be judged. In this way, not only can we satisfy our appetite for making moral judgments, but also, and probably more importantly, we can exercise our judgment-making ability and through exercise perfect this skill. Literature, then, enables us to sharpen the focus of our moral perception which, in turn, can be applied most rigorously to characters in stories. This sounds like a circular activity, but we can take pleasure from it and may even hope that we may experience some carry-over into our everyday life.

This is not to say that we should read literary works as super-moralists, although the ethical content frequently receives the most attention from readers. Some readers see the ethical content as the "message" of the work. This is probably due to a long-standing feeling that literature ought to provide readers with guidelines for living. The trouble with a "message" approach to literature is that it not only reduces the reading experience, but it also simplifies and distorts the ethical content of the work, which is frequently complex, surprising, and seemingly contradictory. Clarifying the meaning of the ethical content of a literary work is an intellectual activity, the product of reason – even while a reader's response is immediate, often visceral, as the reader is moved by the rightness or wrongness of crucial events in a literary work.

ATTRIBUTES OF ETHICAL CONTENT

1. Most people have a common sense notion of right and wrong, but it is also true that most people agree that making moral judgments is difficult.
2. The difficulty in making moral judgments in life is the injunction that we judge not, lest we be judged. That is, judgment always seems final and affects the life of both the person judged and the person judging.
3. Another part of the difficulty of making moral judgments is the recognition that it is impossible to lead a totally moral life.
4. Literature permits the reader to live a totally moral life imaginatively by freeing him to judge the characters in the literary work through the convention of poetic justice. His judgments do not affect the lives of the characters as they would the lives of real people.
5. Despite the fact that in the real world the reader cannot lead a totally moral life, he does have ethical beliefs, conscious and unconscious, which he brings to his reading.
6. According to the reader's ethical beliefs, he is hit by the rightness or wrongness of acts in literary works.
7. Some readers look particularly for the ethical content of a literary work and may become conscious of the relationship between the ethical content and their own lives.
8. Some readers resist the ethical content or fail to notice it.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. The following exercise is designed to encourage the group to work out the relationship between moral questions and the act of judging people. For this reason the group is to imagine that all acts are to be

judged afresh as though our present legal system did not exist.

a. Have the group decide in advance on a list of acts usually thought of as "crimes" (such as armed robbery, shoplifting, murder of a spouse, etc.), writing each crime on a separate piece of paper. Fold over the papers. Ask someone to volunteer to act as "defendant." That person selects one of the pieces of paper and now stands accused of a crime.
b. The defendant should try to explain and justify his action by making up a story to account for it. The story should minimize the guilt, and the defendant may argue that under the circumstances what he did was morally acceptable.
c. The other members of the group serve as a jury. They may question the defendant. When the latter has finished his defense, the group should debate the issue and decide on a verdict, including appropriate punishment, if any.
d. After the group has decided on a verdict, it should discuss the difficulty in determining the moral responsibility of the defendant; the feelings that led to problems in deciding on a verdict; and the effect on the debate of the knowledge that the activity was a "make believe" game.

2. Have the group agree on some act performed by a well-known literary character which some members of the group find morally revolting. Determine the grounds for this judgment. Are there differences of opinion about the character's guilt? Does the character who commits this act receive his just punishment?
3. Have the group discuss how one identifies the moral stance of an author as opposed to that of one of his characters. Is such a distinction possible?
4. Discuss whether literary works have ethical "messages." Ask the members to defend their positions.
5. Discuss whether reading literary works can sharpen moral vision.
6. Ask the group members to discuss whether they have ever identified with the villain of a literary work. How do they account for such feeling?
7. Can literary works be moral or immoral? How?
8. Ask the group to read in advance Ring Lardner's "Haircut." Discuss the doctor's responsibility for the death of Jim Kendall. Should the doctor have been indicted? Should Paul? Why didn't the townspeople investigate the death more? What is the barber's role in the story?

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. Have the group distinguish the ethical beliefs of the two boys in the film. How deep are the beliefs about ethics of all three students in the film?
2. Relate the attitudes of the two boys toward the doctor to their ethical beliefs.
3. Have the group compare the student discussion of judging with its own group activity in judging.
4. The two boys disagree about the responsibility of the author to be a moralist. What is the basis of their disagreement? How might it be resolved?
5. Account for the lack of interest on the girl's part in moral issues in literature. What implications are there in her comment that reading for school is a different matter?
6. Have the group discuss how their own students would respond to "Haircut." Have any of the group taught "Haircut"?

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONTENT OF LITERATURE

The Mind of Huckleberry Finn

Reader talk about knowing in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

The epistemological content of literature is that content of a work of literature which reveals the nature, extent, and limitations of ways of knowing.

EXAMPLE OF READER RESPONSE TO EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONTENT

"I'd like to have more common sense. To get along in the world today you need to have a lot of common sense. The character who has the the most in the book was definitely Huck. Jim was all hung up on superstition, and Tom – he was out in romanticism and fantasies. So if I had to choose, I'd choose Huck." – from *The Mind of Huckleberry Finn*

The workings of the mind are always interesting, and readers respond to the portrayal of the mind in literature. In the technological age in which we live, people are interested in how things work. Things break down, and people want to know how to repair them. In addition, the mind has assumed a particular significance in the twentieth century. Science has experimented with and studied the brain, and such study has led to the development of theories of cognition by both physiologists and psychologists. In the political sphere we have become conscious of such things as "thought control." Students of popular psychology want to "raise" their levels of consciousness. In short, we are a "mind" culture, a fact that has consequences for both writers and readers.

Writers today almost feel under an obligation to portray the mind, if they are not driven to it, like Samuel Beckett. Readers are interested in the qualities of mind of literary characters. Readers want to know how characters go about knowing – what sort of things they can know; the modes of knowing; and the limitations of cognition. Such questions become complex in literature because there are at least three minds at work: the writer's, the literary character's, and the reader's. To further complicate matters, minds have their own prejudices and beliefs, in sum their own value systems, which are partly conscious and partly unconscious. Each mind takes positions about knowing based on its prejudices and beliefs. All of these complexities make it difficult for the reader's mind to interact with the mind of the author through the characters, but such interaction does take place. Indeed, the interaction of these minds is an important part of the experience of literature.

The epistemological content of literature is the position the author takes about certainty and uncertainty. In their works writers engage in a search for certainty, but they usually find uncertainty. That is, writers are better at portraying the puzzlement of life than the resolution of the puzzlement. Literary characters come to new knowledge or fail to come to new knowledge according to the limitations of their minds and according to the author's and their own sense of the limitations of certainty. Even when characters come to new knowledge, that new knowledge is usually the start of another puzzle. Readers accept or reject, feel satisfied or frustrated by the portrayal of the puzzlement and the portrayal of the limitations of certainty. The epistemological content of literature, then, probes that part of the human condition that is cognitive mind. As Gertrude Stein said on her death bed, "What is the answer?" Receiving no answer, she asked: "In that case, what is the question?"

ATTRIBUTES OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONTENT

1. Books are viewed as one of the principal sources of knowledge, though it is less generally understood how books of imaginative literature contain knowledge.
2. Literature is knowledge in that it presents a version of human experience in an organized series of images.
3. The images of literature show the important points of people's lives.
4. One of the important aspects of life is mind, and literature describes and explores the minds of the characters.
5. Literature also reveals the mind of the author – and in doing so reveals the author's beliefs about what people can and cannot know.
6. The author's position about knowing is made evident in the work through the epistemological content – that content which reveals the nature, extent, and limitations of ways of knowing.
7. Authors almost never make epistemological statements directly, but rather embody them in plot, characterization, and symbol.
8. Readers bring their own beliefs about knowing to their readings of literature, and interpret literature in light of those beliefs.
9. Talk about literature is frequently talk about knowing – how characters know, what it is they know, how they come to know, and how readers know through the characters.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. Have the group discuss the meaning of the word *know* in the following sentences. What conclusions can be drawn about the word?
   - I really *know* my husband.
   - Do you *know* whether it's raining outside?
   - I've *known* him a long time.
   - Don't you *know* the difference between your left hand and your right hand?
   - Do you *know* French?
   - Do you *know* Paris?
   - *Know* thyself.
   - If you *knew* Susie, like I *knew* Susie.
   - Do you *know* quantum physics?
   - Do you *know* why she did that?
   - You *know* in your heart that that's wrong.
   - Who *knows* the Ten Commandments?
2. For some, or all, of the above have the group discuss the relationship between knowing and certainty.
3. Read the following list to a group and have them rate each item according to the degree of certainty possible for anyone making such a statement. Use a scale of 1-100 for each item.
   - I know where I left my glasses.
   - I know I'm right in my interpretation.
   - I know my hometown like the back of my hand.
   - I know my students.
   - I know the theory of the Oedipus complex.
   - I know my motives for attending this meeting.
   - I know the purpose of life.
4. Have the group compare and contrast the ways of knowing through history, science, and imaginative literature.
5. Have the group suggest and discuss literary works that contain interesting portrayals of knowing and learning on the part of characters. For example, *A Passage to India*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Major Barbara*. What does literature show about how the mind works, the ways of knowing, and their limitations?
6. Ask the group to read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and to discuss the following questions:
   a) Who is the most knowledgeable character – Huck, Jim, or Tom?
   b) What different *kinds* of knowledge do Huck, Jim, and Tom have?
   c) Do any of the characters gain significant new knowledge during the course of the novel? What does that knowledge do to them?
   d) What kind of knowledge is most respected by Mark Twain?
   e) What are the limits set on knowing by Twain? That is, according to Twain what things can people know and what things can't people know?

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. In the film, the red haired boy says that "*Huckleberry Finn* is simplistic." Try to account for such a response. Have the group discuss the reasons students sometimes dismiss literary works as being simple. What strategies could a teacher use with such a response?
2. Try to account for the different interpretations of Huck's mind – naive vs. shrewd.
3. Have the group compare the discussion in the film of ways of knowing with its own pre-viewing discussion. What similarities were there? How do you account for the differences?
4. How do the necessities of plot affect the epistemological content of *Huckleberry Finn?* What conversation in the film reflects this concern?
5. Have the group discuss how knowledge of the concept of epistemological content would help them in their teaching of *Huckleberry Finn* to their own students. Is it possible to generalize beyond this specific book?
6. Ask the group to discuss the ways of knowing that seem to be most acceptable to their students. What sometimes blocks the student from accepting and valuing literary knowledge? Are there ways of reconciling the epistemologies of the students with the epistemological content of literary works?

THE ONTOLOGICAL CONTENT OF LITERATURE

The Raft and the Shore

Reader talk about reality in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

The ontological content of literature is that content of a work which distinguishes the real from the unreal.

EXAMPLES OF READER RESPONSE TO ONTOLOGICAL CONTENT

"The experiences that Huckleberry Finn has with Tom Sawyer and the pirate gang, when they're going after the Arabs and elephants and all that, that's definitely unreal. The important thing in that sequence is that Huckleberry Finn is trying to find reality."

* * *

"The life that Jim and Huck had on the raft – the tricks that Huck played on him – that's real to me. That's something a boy would do. He was confused. But, still, the life on the shore was real. The gullibility of the people and the hypocrisy of the two, of the Widow and Miss Watson – all that's real. That's part of reality." – from *The Raft and the Shore*

In a commonsense way most people believe that it is easy to distinguish the real from the unreal. People feel they can rely on their built-in reality detectors. It is only upon reflection or through experience that they become aware of how difficult it is to know reality. When questioned, some people claim that every experience constitutes reality, while at the other extreme some people state that experience is mostly illusory and that life is a series of false mirrors. Most of us fall somewhere in between these extremes, and we each have our own unique view of the nature of reality. Perhaps no two people view reality in exactly the same way.

For various reasons, people look for ways to enlarge their grasp of reality. Philosophy helps in one way, and imaginative literature in another. Through literature the reader can gain a heightened sense of reality. His perceptions become sharpened as he sees the differences between the solidity and power in some of the characters' feelings and experiences in contrast with the emptiness of other feelings and experiences depicted in the literary work. One reason this occurs is that the writer has had to make use of artistic form to capture reality. Through selection, order, and design the writer creates a world which, while imaginary, is accepted as a version of the real world by readers. The portrayal of reality in books is necessarily the writer's personal and subjective vision of reality. Not only do writers portray reality, but frequently they are trying to discover reality as they test what is true about life.

As part of the act of reading literature, readers test the portrayal of reality in a book by their own subjective vision of reality. Readers do not necessarily know the worlds they read about, but instinctively they accept or reject those worlds as illuminating the reality of the world they live in. What they judge at this level is not the formal or mimetic success of a book. Rather they are judging the persuasiveness of the ontological content as a reflection of the world they feel to be real and the helpfulness of that content in leading to a better understanding of reality. In this way, readers respond to the ontological content as an extension of, a revision of, confirmation of, or denial of their own sense of reality.

ATTRIBUTES OF ONTOLOGICAL CONTENT

1. People hold different views about the nature of reality.
2. The sense of reality that people have is limited and, at times, confused.
3. Philosophy since the time of Descartes has intensified its examination of the subjective nature of reality by asking questions about man's existence.
4. Literature, too, asks questions about man's existence by examining the real and unreal.
5. Readers respond differently to the portrayal of reality in books according to their own ideas about reality.
6. Books most often do not make explicit statements about reality, but implicitly distinguish the real from the unreal.
7. More mature and more sophisticated readers are more accepting of stylized versions of reality, while less mature and less sophisticated readers tend to accept only realistic writing as a version of reality.
8. Any serious, extended talk about a book becomes in part talk about the author's vision of reality.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING,

1. Have the group agree in advance on an "incident" in common which each is to reproduce in some medium

– print, tape, still picture, drawing, motion picture. The incident should be of the "kitchen garden" variety, such as someone washing dishes or brushing a dog or carrying too many books and dropping them. The incident can be more elaborate (a family quarrel, for example) but should not be too elaborate. The object would be to capture the "reality" of the incident as faithfully as possible. Have the group bring in and share their work with one another. Discuss the following:

a) Have the group evaluate what was captured and what was left out in each presentation. (Sensory details, the expression of emotions, the "meaning" of the incident.)
b) What has been added by each of the group members in an effort to capture the "reality" of the incident? (For example, point of view, structuring devices, etc.)
c) Have the group discuss how one's view of reality is affected when one attempts to portray it in some medium. Does the "author" have a heightened sense of reality? In what ways?
d) Have the group discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each of the media as vehicles for portraying reality.
e) Have the group try to find passages in literature similar to the one they chose for the exercise. The group should examine and discuss the ways in which professional authors have solved the problem of capturing the reality of the incident.

2. If the world created by the writer must be "less real" than reality, how can we account for the phenomenon that readers often feel the world of fiction to be more real than life?

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. Ask the group to describe the various attitudes of the students in the film toward the portrayal of reality in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.* How can such differences be accounted for? Are any of the positions held by the students untenable? How do teachers in English classrooms deal with such varied views of reality?
2. Ask the teachers to set up the following experiment. They should teach to their students two stories on similar themes (initiation, the search for a father, growing old, etc.). One of the stories should be stylized and fantastic (Poe, Kafka). The other story should be more naturalistic (Chekhov, Dreiser, Crane).
   a) What problems do the students have in understanding and accepting the reality of each of the stories? Do they confuse realism with reality? Do they reject fantasy as unreal?
   b) What techniques can be devised to help the students learn to accept different portrayals of reality in literature?
3. Select several poems on the same subject which have significantly different structures and use different literary conventions. Select also a prose piece on the same topic.
   a) After the group has heard the poems and prose selections, ask the members to discuss the portrayal of reality in each of the works. Have them discuss the relationship between literary form (structure, conventions) and the portrayal of reality.
   b) Ask the teachers to repeat this exercise with their students. Ask them to report on the problems their students had and discuss strategies for solving those problems.
4. Making use of insights gained from the protocol film and the exercises, discuss how teachers can accept and work with the different views of reality offered by imaginative writers and student readers.
5. How can reading imaginative literature be considered an "active," "real" experience? What role does responding to literature play in making the experience active and real?

DICTION IN LITERATURE

Beautiful Words

Reader talk about diction in Shakespeare and e.e. cummings

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

Diction is that quality of a work of literature which follows from the denotative and connotative aspects of the words in the work.

EXAMPLES OF READER RESPONSE TO DICTION

"The sonnet gives you – you get the idea of two lovers not really together yet but trying to get together. It makes you feel that it is nice that such a thing should be happening."

* * *

"I didn't really think about the subject matter. I wasn't exactly picturing a man and a woman. It came across much more as just beautiful words." – from *Beautiful Words*

An introductory textbook to the study of poetry on the college level advises students repeatedly that if they will only look up the words in a poem in a good dictionary, they will be able to make sense of the poem. This commonly held view is based on the idea that both denotation and connotation appear in the dictionary, that words are public coin, and that poetry, like all literature, is primarily public, at least as far as meaning is concerned. The college text, published in 1965, further promises that literature always makes sense and that the poems printed in the book will have meaning in common for all students who look up the words in the dictionary. What such a view ignores is a broader sense of the idea of *connotation*, one that sees that connotation includes a range of experience from the universal, held by most people, through a mid-range, held by groups and sub-groups, to the most personal and private meanings. An implication of this broader view of connotations, one appropriate for the second half of the 1970s, is that literature does not always make "good sense" but rather that literary works are the meeting places for writers and readers, that emotions as well as ideas get transmitted, and that there is a subjective element to the most "objective" reading. Recent work in linguistics, together with changing attitudes towards the study of literature and, indeed, a changing view of reality brought about by recent scientific thinking, has influenced our view of language and of the importance of diction in literature.

What does it mean to say that literature doesn't always make "good sense," particularly its diction? It means that literature can't ever be totally understood and filed away as a finished piece of knowledge. Because literature is written by human beings and read by human beings, there will always be differences in meaning depending upon the linguistic performer. That is, for all the meaning held in common, it is the individual writer who gives and the individual reader who perceives meaning, and the meanings created are dependent on the personality of the performing writer or reader working upon the limitations of language. If the writer's diction is a formal acting out of the personality in writing, the response of the reader to that diction is the acting out of the reader's personality. When the reader finds pleasure in the writer's words, this is an act of personality that entails a transformation of the threatening content into a source of pleasure in that it permits the reader to *do* something. That doing – the reader's "handling" of the writer's language – is an activity that gives pleasure not dissimilar to the pleasure of any performance – athletic, intellectual, or amatory.

"Good sense" readings always depend upon a reduction of the complexities of language, particularly a reduction of the psychological complexities of language. We don't mean to suggest that every connotation has to be sexual or "Freudian," but we do mean to emphasize the personal nature of language. Everyone uses the same words, but everyone speaks, reads, and writes a personal language. After the experience that lexicographers and literary people had with *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (1966), the distinctions between denotation and connotation, as sub-concepts, begin to break down. More and more, one person's "connotation" is seen as another's "denotation." What follows from this personal view of language is not necessarily isolation, alienation, and solipsism rushing into the English classroom, but rather a renewed wonderment at the resources of people and their language. With this insight, the range of potential meaning of a literary work expands,

and the lock step sense of moving from one "level" of meaning to another "level" is broken for teachers, critics, and students.

ATTRIBUTES OF DICTION

1. Words are verbal symbols that people use to draw word pictures of their feelings and ideas.
2. More than most people, writers understand the nature of language and they express themselves in words by creating pictures which readers respond to.
3. Readers see pictures in the writer's words through associations they bring to the words.
4. Such associations may be personal and private or generally shared.
5. The most commonly shared associations of a word may be thought of as the "denotation," which appears in the public form of dictionaries.
6. The more personal associations, though frequently shared, may be thought of as the "connotation," which is likely to change and is always implicitly understood by people.
7. Denotation controls the ideas, beliefs, and feelings in the work, especially the conscious content. Connotation is the reader's way into the unconscious content.
8. Readers may defend themselves against any threatening content in the work by denying the picture-making quality of the words.
9. Such readers convert potential threats into aesthetic satisfaction by responding to the formal quality of language.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. Bring in some pictures to show the group. Ask the group to respond to several of the pictures *without using language.* They may make use of non-verbal sounds, facial expressions, or anything else except words. Then have the group discuss their need of words to express adequately their feelings and ideas about the pictures.
2. If, as the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words, is a word ever worth a thousand pictures? That is, what can words do that pictures can't do? Can pictures ever approximate indirect discourse?
3. Ask the group to discuss one or more of the following in terms of denotation and connotation:
   flag, football, television, energy
   What conclusions can be drawn about denotation and connotation as concepts from this exercise?
4. Read to the group the following list of words and have the group write down immediately one or two-word associations to these words:
   Aunt Lucy, hundreds of socks, mother, dreaming, etcetera, war
   Have the group share their associations and try to account for them. What can be learned about the associational value of words from this exercise?
5. Have the group read Shakespeare's Sonnet 18. Ask them to respond to the words in the poem. What different kinds of response were evoked by the diction? How may such differences of response be accounted for? Then ask the group to discuss the principal images in the poem. What is the importance of personification in the poem?

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. Have the group read e.e. cummings' "my sweet old etc." Then have the group compare their pre-viewing associations to the words and phrases in the poem with those of the students in the film. What significant differences were there? Explain the relationship between the word associations and the group's reading and understanding of the poem as a whole.
2. In light of the above exercise, what can be said about the legitimacy of personal associations to words in literary works? Are there principles for determining the "acceptable" range of connotation in establishing meaning in literature?
3. The young woman in the film says that she is aware of the "beautiful words" in the poem, whereas the young man speaks primarily of the images he gets from the poem. Ask the group to find examples in literature of words or phrases which they see as being "beautiful" of and by themselves without any reference to meaning whatsoever. Ask the group to discuss why these words are seen as "beautiful." Direct the group to find examples of "ugly" words. Is one kind of words more difficult to locate than the other? Why? Next, direct the group to think of words and phrases which are not seen as beautiful in themselves but call forth a beautiful image in the mind. Discuss the differences in perception among the group members toward these words.
4. Account for the differences in response of the young man and the young woman to Shakespeare's Sonnet 18. Why does the one respond more to the picture-making quality of the words and the other to the formal qualities of words? Is the young man insensitive to the formal qualities? Is the young woman perhaps defensive in ignoring the sexual implications of lovers?
5. Discuss strategies for teaching these two students (and others like them) what the group thinks they should learn about diction.
6. If there is such a thing as a "literary sensibility," what part does responsiveness to language play in that sensibility? Are there ways to teach responsiveness to language? How useful is it to teach the traditional formal qualities of diction — rhyme, meter, alliteration, onomatopoeia, etc., at the secondary level?

STRUCTURE IN LITERATURE

The Shape of Life

Reader talk about structure in Hemingway's "Old Man at the Bridge"

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

Structure is that quality of a work of literature which provides a sense of the shape of conscious and unconscious experience.

EXAMPLES OF READER RESPONSE TO CONVENTION

"In 'Old Man at the Bridge' I got the idea that the old man would remain there because the narrator went away and he came back and, as he says, the old man was still there."

* * *

"In 'Old Man at the Bridge' I did have some expectations. The old man was just so helpless there was nothing for him to do. I couldn't picture him walking away from it. It seemed more likely than walking away he would go back, and he couldn't do that. It seemed right for him to remain there."

— from *The Shape of Life*

In recent years, teachers and critics have come to view the structure of a literary work as particularly important in discovering the meaning of the work. Under the influence of the "New Criticism," structure has been seen as the key to literature, and students at all levels have been taught how to "analyze" literary works. Analysis has meant determining the relationship of the parts, and part-to-part, part-to-whole relationships have been thought to contain the secrets of the work. Questions such as "What is the function of the fourth chapter?" or "How does the image of war operate in the second stanza?" are typical questions in the teaching of structure. Underlying such questions is the assumption that the formal arrangement of parts, once revealed, yields up the feelings and ideas embedded in the work. Time and time again discovering principles of structure has generated genuine intellectual excitement in students and in readers of literary criticism who have come to see the meaning and value of Mark Schorer's idea of "technique as discovery."

Form and content are indivisible in this view of literature, and the point is to show students the unity of form and content, rather than to emphasize the "contents" of literature, as does this film series. One source of this major tenet of the New Criticism is Coleridge, who argued about the "organic" nature of literature in a famous section of the *Biographia Literaria.* Ironically Coleridge's idea too frequently has been taken to mean counting syllables in sonnets and locating the turning point of *Macbeth* in Act III, scene iii. That is, the idea of organic unity tends in practical application to be reduced to a mechanistic view of structure. Probably the best teachers and critics are reductionists in this way occasionally. Living in a technological age, we are all enraptured with how things are put together, and we sometimes forget to what end.

There are ways to fight off this particular reductionism, and one is to borrow an insight from linguistics. What linguists say about language is also useful in thinking about literature: literary works, like ordinary sentences, have more than one structure. They have deep structures and surface structures. In this view it is no longer necessary, and is indeed unlikely, that all readers respond or will respond to the same structure at the same time. Although we speak of "the structure of a literary work," the phrase is misleading unless we have in mind something as numerical as thirteen chapters or five acts. Any more subtle view of structure must rest on the realization that structure is a collaboration between the writer and the reader. That is, in perceiving the significance of the various relationships of the parts imagined and organized by the writer, the reader creates in the mind a sense of structure, and different readers respond to different relationships or respond differently to the same relationship. At its most extreme, one reader can see a particular work as a tragedy; another can see it as a comedy. The most noted critics of Ibsen and Chekhov have frequently disagreed in this way.

Another way to fight off mechanistic reductionism is to borrow an insight from psychoanalytic psychology. Literature may be seen as having conscious and unconscious content. The conscious content refers to feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes held knowingly by the author. The unconscious content refers to more or less disguised fantasies held by the writer (of which the writer was unaware while writing the book) and which are noticed by readers. While there is much disagreement about the unconscious content of literature, most readers agree that it exists in some form. As a shaping device,

structure in literature gives form to both the conscious and unconscious content and thus gives readers a sense of the shape of conscious and unconscious experience in life.

ATTRIBUTES OF STRUCTURE

1. One way of thinking about structure in literature is to see it as involving part-to-part and part-to-whole relationships.
2. The modern tradition of analyzing literature takes this view of structure.
3. Such a view tends to suggest that a literary work has one structure visible to all trained in the techniques of analysis.
4. But as in life, where any experience takes on different shapes for different participants, a literary work may have many structures at once – deep structures and surface structures.
5. Readers see different shapes in a literary work not necessarily so much because they vary in ability as readers but rather because literature is dynamic, with constantly changing parts.
6. Depending upon what each reader consciously decides the work is "about," the reader will respond to one structure in the work rather than another. The reader may also feel that there is a structure to the unconscious content.
7. In reading literary works, readers generate expectations about how the work will move or develop. These expectations are based on the readers' experiences in life and with literature.
8. The satisfying of these expectations depends on the completion of the structure and a new perception on the part of the reader of what a particular life experience is like.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. From any source you can find bring in pictures of different kinds of buildings. Ask the group to identify the kind of building in terms of function. What generalizations can be made about the relationship between architectural structure and function? Ask the group to discuss whether these generalizations are in any way applicable to literature.
2. Have the group make a test of the different ways in which a dwelling can be described. (For example, arithmetically in terms of the square footage; in terms of the lives of the occupants; functions of various rooms.) Discuss how each of these is a way of describing a structure and how the same building can be seen as having different structures. Extend this discussion to literary structure – different ways of describing literary works.
3. For a traditional view of literary structure, have the group read in advance Cleanth Brooks' "The Heresy of Paraphrase" in *The Well Wrought Urn.* Discuss the major ideas in the essay. Have the group consider the issue of teaching paraphrase at the secondary level. Is there a discrepancy between the ideas of the critic and the needs of the student?
4. Choose a literary work well enough known to be discussed or short enough to be duplicated for the meeting. Have each member of the group describe the structure of the work and share that description with the whole group. How can differences of perception be accounted for?
5. Have the group read Hemingway's "Old Man at the Bridge." What expectations about the outcome of the story did the group have when reading the first paragraph? Were those expectations realized by the end of the story? What life experiences went into the expectations of the readers?
6. Discuss the importance of structure in generating the expectations of readers about literary works. Is structure synonymous with plot?
7. Have each member of the group describe the structure of "Old Man at the Bridge." What differences of perception are there about the structure and how can such differences be accounted for? As part of this exercise, have the group discuss the last paragraph of the story and its role in the structure of the story.

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. While the film is still fresh in mind, have the group describe the structure of the film *The Shape of Life.* Are there principles of organization to the film? Does the film have a plot?
2. Discuss the feelings and comments of the students in the film about classroom analysis of literature. Discuss the teachers' comments about the way the students seem to feel. What is the role of the analysis of literary structures in the teaching of literature?
3. Discuss with the group the validity of the following proposition: The more conventional the literary structure, the more the structure is accepted as "appropriate" by the unsophisticated reader; the more unconventional, the less the work is accepted and the more the structure is considered to be inappropriate by the unsophisticated reader.
4. Discuss the difficulties the students had in responding to "Old Man at the Bridge." How were they hampered by a lack of knowledge about literary structure? How were they hampered by their own youth?
5. This story is commonly taught at the tenth-grade level. Discuss the appropriateness of using this story at this level. Are some literary structures more appropriate for some grade levels than for others? Should the brevity of a work always be the determining factor?
6. Given the discussion of structure the group has participated in and the film *The Shape of Life,* ask the group to reconsider "Old Man at the Bridge." Does the story have one structure or several structures? What is the relationship of structure to meaning in the story?
7. Have the group consider strategies for teaching structure in a non-mechanistic way to secondary students.

CONVENTION IN LITERATURE

Happy Ending

Reader talk about literary conventions in Frost and Blake

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

Convention is that quality of a work of literature which consists of those traditional and emerging patterns that reinforce the conscious ideas and feelings in the work and control the unconscious ideas and feelings.

EXAMPLES OF READER RESPONSE TO CONVENTION

"I think the use of rhyme is very clever in this poem."

* * *

"I can enjoy Frost's 'Fire and Ice' for its literary value, even more than its emotional threat. The theme of the destruction of the world doesn't bother me." – from *Happy Ending*

Both in life and in literature the term "convention" creates positive and negative feelings. No one wants to be thought of as acting conventionally – as being a conventional person. People pride themselves on their uniqueness, their individuality and originality. Yet people's lives are permeated by conventions, and we could not function without some established patterns of behavior. We feel comfortable with the conventional acts of others because we can recognize and interpret them. Perhaps more importantly, we make use of conventions to plan and organize our lives both in a large sense and also in a small sense in the form of a day-to-day agenda that we carry in our minds.

Similarly, in discussing literature we tend to look for originality and to devalue a work as being "conventional" when it contributes nothing new to an established form or to an idea. Yet literature needs conventions if the writer is to communicate with the reader. It is all too easy for the reader to get lost in the labyrinth of the writer's mind, and conventions provide signposts to direct the reader along the lines of the writer's thought. In addition, conventions are frequently shorthand notations for common experiences which are in effect identified and summarized in this way. Conventions involve an agreement between the writer and the reader that the pattern presented may be allowed to stand for the reality of common experience. In this way such a convention as "the miser" as a stock character is a shorthand way of talking about an experience that most of us have had. Here the characterization is broad enough so that most readers can supply details from their own experience and in so doing validate the characterization through an act of recognition.

In addition to being a means of understanding for readers, convention is a source of pleasure in several ways. Readers gain pleasure from recognizing conventions; the experience is similar to that of recognizing old friends in life. If readers find pleasure in the recognition, they also expect pleasure from the writer's use of a convention in a new way – just as we expect pleasure from hearing about what has happened to our friends over a period of time. Another way in which readers get pleasure from conventions is that conventions serve as defenses, converting potentially threatening content into esthetically satisfying forms. The subject matter of literature deals with the horrendous and the dreadful aspects of life far more often than we may think. Literature is based on conflict, on overt or covert violence, and on people's appetites, including the sexual – on our animal natures. In life and in literature the transcendence of our animal natures into the human and even the superhuman is accomplished through form. Convention is the formal principle in literature that permits such transcendence, and that transcendence is the ultimate pleasure for readers.

ATTRIBUTES OF CONVENTION

1. The term "convention" frequently has a negative connotation in that it may suggest a lack of originality, but conventions give pleasure both in life and in literature.
2. In life, conventions act as defenses against the randomness of experience.
3. Conventions also give pleasure to our lives in the form of ceremonies – weddings, confirmations, holiday celebrations.
4. Similarly, in literature conventions give pleasure by permitting readers to share in understanding the work.
5. Readers recognize conventions of literary form dealing with theme, language, and structure.
6. Readers use such conventions to guide their responses away from the terror implicit in the vision of some works. They convert the threatening fantasy content into the perception of esthetically satisfying forms.
7. Conventions permit readers to use defensive devices

such as distancing, intellectualizing, and disguising feelings about the self.

8. Conventions sometimes stay the same but sometimes change as writers rework old conventions and create new ones.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. Ask the group to identify some of the leading conventions associated with some area of our culture such as male-female relationships, holidays, education, and the like. Have the group discuss their attitudes toward these conventions, suggesting how and why they value or feel critical of them.
2. Have the group discuss what has stayed the same and what has changed in the conventions associated with the following:

   dating, courtship, marriage
   churchgoing
   family get-togethers
   dress codes
   traveling

3. Ask several members of the group to role play a situation where a visitor completely unfamiliar with our conventions is trying to participate. If it helps to give maximum distance for the sake of role-playing, the visitor could be an alien being from outer space who has been invited to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jones for dinner, or the visitor could attend a faculty meeting. After the role-playing discuss with the group:
   a) What conventions gave the visitor problems?
   b) How many conventions do we employ during common occasions?
   c) Why are these conventions important?
   d) Why are conventions important in life generally?
4. Choose a literary work well enough known to be discussed or short enough to be duplicated for the meeting. Have the group identify conventions of theme, structure, and language. On the basis of this exercise discuss the relationship of convention to literature.
5. Have the group read Robert Frost's "Fire and Ice." Then ask them to discuss how they feel about it – how they like it, what they think is important in it. For those who like the poem, have them try to account for their liking a poem that makes use of the theme of the end of the world. (Note that this theme is a convention.) Does Frost communicate feelings of fear and terror in the poem? What part do such feelings play in their response?
6. Have the group read William Blake's "A Poison Tree." Ask them to discuss the use of the conventions of hero and villain in the poem. Are other conventions noteworthy in the poem?
7. Through discussion of several literary works in the same genre – drama, poetry, fiction – have the group discuss how literary conventions change. Try to account for some of the changes.
8. Discuss the role of convention in the believability of literary works. Do conventions ever get in the way of believability?

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. While the film is still fresh in mind, have the group identify the conventions of film making that appear in *Happy Ending*.
2. Through a discussion of a specific literary work (such as Hardy's "During Wind and Rain"), have the group separate out conventions of theme, language, and structure. Are generalizations possible about each of the sub-groups? That is, do literary themes often take on identifiable form? Are there principles of conventional language? Of conventional structures?
3. Discuss the responses of the students to "Fire and Ice." How did the students get pleasure from the conventions and how did they use them as defenses? What similarities were there between the talk of the students and the talk of the group before viewing? What were the differences? How may such similarities and differences be accounted for?
4. Ask the group to discuss how and why the young man in the film changed his opinion about the hero and villain of Blake's "A Poison Tree." How does the recognition of conventions affect the interpretation of literature? Was there any similar disagreement about who's who in the poem among the viewers discussing the poem? Discuss whether there is a right or wrong answer to the question of the use of these conventions in Blake's poem.
5. An important part of learning about literature is learning about literary conventions. What are the best ways to learn about conventions? Should students be given lists of conventions to memorize? Is it appropriate to teach the psychology of conventions at the high school level? Discuss strategies for teaching conventions.

AUTHORIAL VOICE IN LITERATURE

The Mystery of Edgar Allan Poe

Reader talk about Poe as revealed in his short stories

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

Authorial voice in literature is that quality of a work of literature which suggests the sense of an author as a being apart from the characters in a literary work – as a person who has feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes, both conscious and unconscious, that find expression in the work.

EXAMPLE OF READER RESPONSE TO AUTHORIAL VOICE

"I certainly do get a sense of the author talking to me whenever I read Poe. In fact, I just think that Poe is always there. He's the one telling us the story; and I think sometimes he's the one who feels he's gone mad, and that he's viewing the world. He has the acute senses, as he says in 'Tell-Tale Heart,' and that – that's what some mistake for madness. It's part of his view of himself as an artist, I think." – from *The Mystery of Edgar Allan Poe.*

Since books are written by people, readers quite naturally want to know something about the person who is talking to them through the printed page. When deprived of such information, or when it is unavailable or inaccessible, readers will "invent" an author based on what they have read. That is, they will take the feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes which they see as representing the meaning of work X and attribute them to a fictive construct of author X. The concept of authorial voice approximates this mental construct. Yet because we are seldom without some information, or misinformation, about the authors of literary works, our sense of an author-in-the-work will usually be impure, in that it will contain or be in part based on some biographical notions of the author's life.

Our sense of the person-in-the-work is obviously distinct from the person-in-life, although they are clearly related. At the same time, readers come to recognize the author by the characteristic habits of style exhibited in a body of works – so much so that they see the style as the person. This other sense of the author-in-the-work leads also to a fictive construct, which is contained in the concept of authorial voice: the author as the physical embodiment of the style. The author is elegant or tough or fussy, in each case the description summarizing and personifying the feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes in the book.

Both the sense of an author as a person apart from the characters in a book and of an author as a characteristic style are experienced by the reader as a voice talking over a period of time. "Authorial voice" differs from the term "the vision of an author" to the extent that it is rooted in time and is an oral, not a visual, metaphor for a part of the reader's experience with a literary text.

ATTRIBUTES OF AUTHORIAL VOICE

1. Each reader "invents" a personal sense of the author in reading a literary work.
2. Each reader's "author" is likely to share some things in common with the "author" of other readers because of the common experience of the literary text.
3. One way the reader invents the author is through information or mis-information about the author's life.
4. Readers find the author in the work through parallels between the work and the author's life.
5. A second way the reader invents the author is as the physical embodiment of a characteristic style of writing.
6. Readers find the author in the work through personifying recognizable linguistic patterns which they then attribute to the author.
7. Most readers hear the authorial voice as a mixture of the two – the author's personal life and a characteristic style of writing.
8. The authorial voice suggests a set of feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes.
9. These feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes may be conscious or unconscious on the part of the author.

Hence the definition of authorial voice: the sense of an author as a being apart from the characters in a literary work – as a being who has feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes, both conscious and unconscious, that find expression in the work.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE VIEWING

1. The instructor should arrange for the group to witness an improvisation involving a confrontation between two people. Suggestions: an argument between a husband and wife over money, over teen age children, or suspected infidelity, or Women's Liberation, etc. The improvisation should be recorded on tape for later playback.
   a) Direct the group to observe the action and dialog closely. Participants will be asked to write the beginning of a short story based on what they see and hear in the improvisation. The characters and the substance of the talk should be included in this beginning. Give

the participants about twenty minutes to write.

b) After twenty minutes of concentrated writing, direct the participants to examine their efforts closely and to underline with a red marker those parts of the story that they recognize as coming from their personal experiences, fantasies, or contacts with people they have known. Have the members of the group place an "X" over words and phrases they view as features of their own personal style. Ask the group to draw some conclusions about what they just did. How much was left unmarked in the stories?

c) Divide the group in smaller groups of five persons each. Direct each group to read the five "stories" from each of its members, making notes as to the differences among the five stories. Ask them to make observations as to the specific characteristics of each author's "voice." Ask them to select an interesting one to share with the larger group.

d) After listening to one paper from each group, the group as a whole should compare and contrast the different examples of "authorial voice." Play the tape recording of the original improvisation as a final comparison.

e) Have the group discuss (or write) what conclusions they came to about authorial voice as a result of this exercise. Specifically include the relation of authorial voice to the personal life of the author, its control over the tone of the story, its appeal to the response of the reader, and the specific qualities that determine authorial voice.

2. Select several short stories by relatively unknown authors. Divide into small groups for discussion of the stories.

a) Ask each group to determine what kind of person they imagine the author to be in each instance based on their reading of the story. Have them identify the author's feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes.

b) Share these conclusions with the large group. If the group reports are similar, what does this indicate about authorial voice and the reader? If the group reports are dissimilar, what does this indicate about authorial voice and the reader?

(Suggested variation on the above exercise.
#1 Use short stories by the same author.
#2 Use short stories by women authors only.
#3 Use romantic stories written by men authors only.
#4 Use poems instead of short stories.)

ACTIVITIES AFTER VIEWING

1. General discussion: ask the group to respond to the remark quoted at the beginning of this section as an example of response to authorial voice. Is there agreement or disagreement with this teacher's opinion of Poe?

2. Prepare a tape recording of excerpts of several writers with distinctively different "voices."

a) Ask the group members to respond subjectively to the voices: the voice (pleases me, soothes me, excites me, annoys me, angers me, does nothing for me, etc.)

b) Discuss the reasons for the differences of opinion noted within the group. Should everyone respond the same to the voices of the writers? What happens when well-meaning literature teachers insist on the student's "appreciating" a given writer?

3. Play a recording of a) an impressionist such as Rich Little; b) an actor such as Olivier or Burton doing several different characters' speeches; and c) a political figure such as President Kennedy. Ask the group to discuss the relationship between the speaking voice in these instances and the concept of authorial voice.

4. a) Select at least three "narrators" from the group. Ask them to view a short film of an incident and to prepare individually a retelling of the incident to the larger group. Tape record each narration for analysis by the group. b) Ask each participant to prepare answers to the following questions as he hears the different narrators:

1. What characteristics in the narration are solely markers of the narrator's personal style of speech or personality?
2. What inferences can you make as to differences in feelings, beliefs, ideas, or attitudes on the part of the different narrators? What evidence can you cite for these inferences?
3. What are obvious differences in the narratives?

c) Share the conclusions of the observations with the group. Ask the three narrators if they were aware they were communicating their feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes. d) Show the original film to the group. Ask the participants to identify the details that were present in the film that were not selected by any of the narrators. Discuss what this experiment reveals about the nature of authorial voice.

5. In the film, *The Mystery of Edgar Allan Poe*, several readers make the point that Poe has a recognizable voice throughout all his work. Is this characteristic true of writers in general? Do writers of best sellers maintain consistent, identifiable voices? Select with the group several writers with which to explore this point.

6. In the film, several readers make judgments about Poe based on the subject matter of his short stories. One concludes that Poe must have known what it is like to be insane to have written about insanity so convincingly. Is it necessary for a writer to have experienced a human state in order to write convincingly about it? Does the writer who has lived the experience present a more authentic story than the writer who has only imagined it?

7. Discuss the implications of the concept of authorial voice for the teaching of literature.

CONCEPTS IN THE FILM SERIES RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

1. *Psychological content of literature.* That content of a work of literature which reveals the nature of human motivation.

2. *Sociological content of literature.* That content of a work of literature which reveals how conflict and harmony make up the interaction of the individual and society.

3. *Ethical content of literature.* That content of a work of literature which reveals the consequences of human acts and suggests systems of values with which to judge those acts.

4. *Ideological content of literature.* That content of a work of literature which reveals the direction and limits of the thinking that underlie a body of beliefs.

5. *Epistemological content of literature.* That content of a work of literature which reveals the nature, extent, and limitations of ways of knowing.

6. *Ontological content of literature.* That content of a work of literature which distinguishes the real from the unreal.

7. *Diction.* That quality of a work of literature that follows from the denotative and connotative aspects of the words in the work.

8. *Structure.* That quality of a work of literature which provides a sense of the shape of conscious and unconscious experience.

9. *Convention.* That quality of a work of literature which consists of those traditional and emerging patterns that reinforce the conscious ideas and feelings in the work and control the unconscious ideas and feelings.

10. *Authorial Voice.* That quality of a work of literature which suggests the sense of an author as a being apart from the characters in a literary work — as a person who has feelings, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes, both conscious and unconscious, that find expression in the work.

CATEGORY SYSTEMS, READER RESPONSE, AND TEACHING LITERATURE

George Hillocks, Jr.

Beginning with I.A. Richards' *Practical Criticism*, a number of writers, including James R. Squire and Alan C. Purves, have developed various systems for the classification and study of student response to literature.[1] What these writers have in common is their attempt to define categories for use in such analysis. Developing categorical systems is nothing new. Aristotle examined the various categories of literature in his *Poetics* and in doing so established our notion of genre. In the *Nichomachean Ethics* he analyzed the categories of virtue and attempted to show their relationships. A number of studies of classroom interaction have been based on elaborate sets of categories which have been used to classify and then to analyze what happens in the classroom.[2] The taxonomies of educational objectives are hierarchical systems in which each level subsumes the level beneath it.[3]

To the uninitiated, systems of abstract categories frequently appear to be little more than mental games played for the amusement of the writers. But the overwhelming diversity of human behavior requires sets of categories if we are to come to any understanding of it. Without systems of categories we would be lost in jungles of trivia, unable to benefit from an apparent maze of endlessly differentiated experience. For human beings the making of categories appears to be an unavoidable part of life. We use categories in the most mundane of our activities; we classify ourselves in terms of various sets of categories: sex, age, level of income, interests, and so forth. We categorize foods in order to plan our meals. We even categorize parts of streets in terms of left and right for the purpose of driving. Most of our conversation would be impossible without mutual understanding of various sets of categories. In short, categories are a necessary and useful part of human existence.

The Protocol Materials in English films present a set of concepts which may be used to categorize aspects of the text to which readers respond. The first six films in the series deal one each with the sociological, ideological, psychological, ethical, epistemological, and ontological "contents" of literature. The next three films in the series deal with various aspects of the formal qualities of literature: convention, diction, and structure. The last film, on "authorial voice in literature," deals with a concept which is pivotal and often misunderstood. It talks about a reader's sense of the author in the work. Each of these concepts has been dealt with elsewhere in detail. However, for my purposes, a few comments on the first six will be in order.

Viewed literally, the content of literature will be as endlessly diversified as the imagination of writers can make it. At one level of abstraction in dealing with content we might try to describe the characters and the problems they face. At a somewhat higher level of abstraction we might attempt to categorize all the possible themes that literary works develop. Both tasks would be extremely difficult, and even if it were possible to complete them, they would likely result in an inordinate number of categories and sub-categories. Fortunately, as categories increase in their level of abstraction, they necessarily become more inclusive, and therefore, fewer in number and more manageable. The concepts defining the categories illustrated in the PME films are at a level of abstraction high enough to be few in number.

This abstract quality of the categories results in highly abstract generalizations about the concerns of literature. Literary works, however, by their nature avoid the explicit expression of such generalizations. With few exceptions, authors who deal with the nature of human motivation, "systems of values with which to judge . . . acts," or the distinction between the real and unreal, do so implicitly. Although a sociological treatise might make a number of explicit statements about "the interaction of man and society" (statements which may be based on explicitly defined inferences), the careful sociologist will do his best to make such statements clear and unambigious. With few exceptions, the literary artist allows such generalizations to remain implicit in his arrangement of events, characters, imagery, and so forth.

The tasks facing the readers of two such different works will be almost totally different. The reader of a sociological treatise will be confronted with a set of explicit statements about some aspect of man's interaction with society. He will have to make very few inferences to discover the central meaning of the work. The inferences that he does make will have to do with such problems as applying the findings to other bodies of data, extrapolating from the study to other problems, and evaluating the premises, the methodology, or the conclusions of the study. The reader of a literary work, on the other hand, must piece together the details of the work and make an increasingly complex series of inferences before he reaches generalizations dealing with such problems as "the nature of human motivation." That is, the reader will have to make a series of inferences about the motivations of a number of characters in a number of situations. He must determine what the motivational forces in the work do and do not have in common. Finally he must determine what all such instances, taken together, indicate about the author's view of the "nature of human motivation." Clearly, then, the concepts described in the PME films

incorporate not only such high level inferences, but the lower level inferences leading to them and the concrete language of the text which gives rise to the chain of inference making.

IMPLICATIONS OF PME CONCEPTS

Some readers may never make the highest level inferences suggested by the descriptions of the PME concepts. That, of course, does not preclude their working with the content of literature at some other level. Nor does it preclude their "appreciating" the work as a whole at some less abstract level. When, as a twelve year old, I first read *Huckleberry Finn*, I was fascinated by the adventure and delighted by the humor, but it never occurred to me that the novel offered social criticism or dealt in any way with the values and value systems of those people living along the shore of the mighty river.

Because the PME concepts cut across what might be called levels of response, and because they demand an examination of the sources of response in literary texts, and at the same time illustrate reader response, the films and the concepts which they illustrate have a number of implications for teacher training, for the teaching of literature, and for curriculum.

The findings of John Kinnaird's survey of undergraduate programs in English confirm the findings of the earlier Wilcox study[3] and what we all know to be true of undergraduate programs in English: that they promulgate a view of literature as composed of literary history, genre, and major authors.[5] Although Kinnaird finds some loosening up of requirements and some diversification of the courses offered, even the new courses tend to be of a pattern with the old: Black Literature, The Literature of Ethnic Minorities, Women in Literature, Film, Contemporary Literature, Twentieth-Century Drama, and so forth (pp. 761-762). The emphasis, even in the more innovative courses, tends to be on surveys, authors, and genres. The schema for the study of literature in traditional areas is simply carried over to non-traditional areas. The student leaves such courses knowing (perhaps) about the Harlem renaissance, various black writers and their works, the treatment of women in the literature of various centuries, the development of conventions in twentieth-century drama, etc.

Few, if any, of either the traditional or "innovative" courses are likely to provide the student with a perspective from which he can view the whole of literature, a perspective of the utmost importance to secondary school English teachers. Without it, their attention as teachers will be riveted to a root here, a stem there, perhaps a whole tree somewhere else, but there will be a general failure to see the forest for the trees. Attention will be devoted to the literary works, movements, or periods. Curricular decisions will be made on the basis of *a priori* assumptions about what subject matter ought to be known.

Of course, some teachers break out of the college dominated cycle of author, genre, period courses. But when they do, they often move to the rap session which may have little or nothing to do with the literature under discussion. In one class which I observed, the discussion stemmed from the problem of suffering in Richard Kim's novel, *The Martyred*. After an initial reference to the novel the talk ("talk" is more appropriate because no real *discussion* took place) quickly became largely unreferenced opinion-giving which might be summarized as follows: suffering is bad, but it is also good because it makes one used to suffering. The talk meandered from this notion of suffering to the problem with parents, drugs, and other miscellaneous social abuses. The students did not, during the fifty minutes I observed the class, return to the novel. In a good many classes this pattern is frequently reiterated. The teacher poses a problem on which students have opinions. The students give their opinions, and that is that. Clearly, literature need not be included in such a pattern at all. The NCTE sells a pamphlet entitled "A Thousand Topics for Composition." A companion volume called "A Thousand Topics to Keep Your Students Talking" might sell like hotcakes.

Both the college and the rap patterns tend to ignore student response to literature, the former by offering courses organized around the study of traditions (*e.g.*, literary form) which have little to do with the interests and abilities of most secondary students, the latter by avoiding serious contact with literature. Some understanding of the types and levels of responses would enable teachers to avoid both extremes by developing curricula with the power to encourage more meaningful and sophisticated responses to literature. For the most part, however, courses which might provide teachers with the needed perspective are absent from college curricula. Even courses in literary criticism, which ought to provide some useful approaches to literature, are few and far between. When they are offered, Kinnaird indicates that students are apparently not over eager to take them (p. 762).

The concepts illustrated in the PME films on literature can alleviate the problem. As a category system illustrated by student talk about literature, the films provoke an analysis of what literature is and offer an introduction to the examination of student response to literature.

Prospective teachers and even experienced teachers may not be accustomed to the use of category systems, and the unfamiliarity of the categories may provoke a degree of antipathy. One of the most effective ways to introduce a category system is simply to involve the learners in its use, its evaluation, and finally its revision, should that prove necessary. Such a procedure makes the system familiar and will enable the learners to use it as the need arises.

There are four criteria which can be used to test the validity and usefulness of a category set.

1) *The test of inclusiveness.* To what extent does the set incorporate all examples of a given type of phenomena within its system? For example, does the PME set omit one or more important aspects of literary content? If so, what is missing, and will it stand as a clearly separate concept?

2) *The test of mutual exclusiveness.* Once we have set the boundaries for the system, if the concepts within it are to be at all useful, they must be mutually exclusive. When items can be classified by more than one concept, the definitions of the individual concepts usually need clarification.

Sometimes, clarification and the addition of arbitrary ground rules eliminate the problem.

3) *The test of parallelism.* In developing the system of concepts the criteria by which the concepts are established should be parallel from one concept to the next. That is, it would not make sense to establish one grouping of insects on the basis of body pigmentation, another on the basis of wing structure, and a third on the basis of feeding habits. At a given level in the system, the kinds of criteria for establishing differences among concepts should be similar. In assessing the PME concepts there are two sub-sets: content and form. Are the concepts within each category parallel in terms of what they deal with and the kinds of criteria used to establish them?
4) *The test of explanatory power.* Category sets in the area of human behavior should enable us to identify specific and clearly defined aspects of human behavior. Further, their application should provide us with insights, or even simple information, not otherwise available.

It is not my purpose to evaluate the categories and their concepts here. The point is that evaluating the PME sets of concepts will thoroughly familiarize students with them and will provide a starting point for formulating other sets of categories for the same or different purposes.

WORKING WITH THE PME CONCEPTS

Once prospective teachers have recognized the utility of examining student responses to literature, they can begin to analyze student responses more seriously in terms of the concepts presented in the films. They might collect student responses themselves, using a story which is amenable to interpretation at multiple levels. Responses can be collected from high school students by presenting them the story, permitting them to read it, and asking them to write an explanation of what the story means. Or perhaps prospective teachers might conduct and tape record a discussion of the story with two or three high school students. These written responses and tape recordings can then be analyzed to gain insight into the types and levels of student responses.

At this point prospective teachers begin asking what further to do. The activities that follow might well deal with assessing the relative difficulty of materials, designing questions which will be effective with students at various ability levels, planning small group discussions which permit students to express their own ideas and to respond to the ideas of others without direct guidance from the teacher, and role playing and other means of responding to literature which will enable students to gain insight into what they read.

To this point I have emphasized using the PME films with prospective teachers. Obviously, however, the films have something to offer to experienced teachers as well. Most experienced teachers will immediately see the usefulness of being able to classify types and levels of student responses in order to decide what questions to ask, what materials to use, what kinds of activities to generate, and so forth.

There has been an unfortunate tendency in American education to dichotomize curriculum and instruction. Building curricula in English has frequently been a process of selecting works and problems without very much consideration of what is to happen in the classroom in connection with them. The parallel view of instruction has held the teacher as a sort of academic artisan whose job it is to operate the prescribed curriculum. A sounder view is that, at the very least, curriculum and instruction should have reciprocal relationships to one another, with curriculum growing out of classroom experience and with classroom activities evolving from curriculum development. The PME films, concerned with both the subject matter of the curriculum (in this case, literature) and student response to it, reflect this unified view of curriculum and instruction. The teacher who would do more than simply operate a curriculum must stand Janus-like facing the students on the one hand, the subject matter on the other, and bring the two together. For such an endeavor, some set of operational concepts for the analysis of both literature and student responses to it can be extremely beneficial.

Three general teaching-curriculum tasks require such a set of concepts. First is the assessment of student responses which will take place before, during, and after instruction. The initial assessment helps to determine the materials, the types of questions, and the kinds of activities that are appropriate in helping students move toward more sophisticated responses to literature. Informal assessments during the course of instruction enable the teacher to make on-the-spot revisions and adaptions as they appear necessary. Somewhat more formal assessments, made at intervals throughout a sequence of instruction, apprise the teacher of the effectiveness of his planning and permit him to revise earlier decisions about materials, problems, and activities. In preparing for this aspect of teaching, prospective and experienced teachers alike can examine written, video-taped, or audio-taped responses. Video tapes of actual classroom sequences, of course, are especially valuable in helping prospective teachers to assess student responses in on-going classrooms.

Second, a set of concepts can be very useful in selecting appropriate materials and activities for a class. Poems, short stories, plays, and novels can be judged for inclusion in the curriculum on the basis of the types and levels of responses they demand for understanding. Stories like "The Most Dangerous Game" require very few and very simple inferences for comprehension and appreciation. Other materials of equivalent difficulty in terms of vocabulary and syntax require a great deal of high level inference making if the reader is to make much sense of them – for example, A.E. Coppard's story "Arabesque, the Mouse." That oft quoted student phrase, "This writer beats around the bush too much," is frequently translatable into something like the following: "I don't like this writer because he includes a lot of details for which I see no purpose or meaning." If the teacher has made an assessment of the student's responses to literature, and if he has made an assessment of the types and levels of responses required by a literary work, he can fit the two together so that the student becomes gradually more sophisticated as a reader without frustration. In my experience prospective English teachers are notoriously good readers. They make

inferences so readily that they frequently believe their inferences have been literally stated by the author. Practice in examining the types and levels of responses required in understanding literary works frequently results in greater insight into the problems which less sophisticated readers confront.

Third, the types of problems and questions which a teacher raises in relation to a particular work control, in part, the difficulty of the reading. For example, everyone recognizes that *Huckleberry Finn* can be read on a number of different levels. Similarly, Steinbeck's *The Pearl* can be read as a simple adventure story or as a morality tale of good and evil and their effects on humankind. A story such as "The Most Dangerous Game" remains relatively simple as long as students focus on that aspect of the psychological content that deals with why the main characters act as they do. But interpretation becomes far more complex if we raise the level of the problem to a question such as the following: What is the nature of man as posited by the story as a whole?

In all of these teaching-curriculum tasks some category system for the analyses of response is indispensible. Whether the teacher adopts the concepts illustrated by the PME films, supplements them with concepts derived from other studies, or ultimately develops his own set of operational concepts is unimportant. The value of the PME films is their attractive illustration of concepts which can lead teachers to greater acuity in their assessment of student response and, thereby, to greater proficiency and depth in their teaching of literature.

[1] James R. Squire, *The Responses of Adolescents While Reading Four Short Stories* (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1964) and Alan C. Purves, *Elements of Writing about a Literary Work: A Study of Response to Literature* (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968).

[2] See for example, Arno A. Bellack, *et al, The Language of the Classroom* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1966) and B. Othanel Smith, *et al, A Study of the Strategies of Teaching* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois, 1967).

[3] See for example, David R. Krathwohl, Benjamin S. Bloom, and Bertram B. Masia, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook II: Affective Domain* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1964).

[4] See *A Comprehensive Survey of Undergraduate Programs in English in the United States*, 1970, available in hard copy or microfiche through ERIC/RLS, ED-044-422.

[5] John Kinmaird, "What's Happening to the English Curriculum: A Survey and some Reflections," *College English*, 34, 6 (March 1973), 755-772.

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